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ADAM BEDE

A PLAY

Dramatized from George Eliot's Novel

ADAM BEDE

BY

MABEL CLARE CRAFT

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA.

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THE REPLY OF THE TALKER - CLASS OF NOV 20 1961 GUTTERBY HILL <i>Oct 25-1961</i> CLASS OF XYG 1010 GOF

VIA AIR MAIL
 REGISTERED TO

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PLACE—Staffordshire and Berkshire, England.

TIME—1799-1800.

HETTY SORREL	MARTIN POYSER, JR.
ADAM BEDE	MISS LYDIA DONNI-
CAPTAIN ARTHUR DONNI-	THORNE
THORNE	MRS. IRWINE
MRS. POYSER	SQUIRE DONNITHORNE
MARTIN POYSER	THE PROSECUTOR
DINAH MORRIS	DR. BUFORD
RECTOR IRWINE	BAILIFF OF COURT
BARTLE MRSSEY	CLERK OF COURT
SARAH STONE	JAIL CHAPLAIN
JOHN STONE	THE JUDGE
JOHN OLDING	FOREMAN OF THE JURY
TOTTY	A COUNSELLOR AT LAW
MOLLY	A TURNKEY
TOMMY POYSER	TENANTS, JURORS, Etc.

ACT I.

(PLACE: The kitchen of the Hall Farm. TIME: July 16, 1799. At the right of the stage a door leading to the yard; at the left a big open fireplace and a cupboard. Above the fireplace a high mantel, with brass candlesticks in a row. A tall oak clock of old-fashioned make and brilliantly polished, stands at the back of the stage, under the stairs an oak table, brightly polished and turned up against the wall. Above it are the shelves of bright pewter dishes and blue and white plates. At the back of the stage (left) is an alcove, one step up with a wide entrance, and here are seen churns and shelves on which stand mounds of butter and cheeses. The earthenware is cream and red with soft brown wood and bright tin, making a pretty color study. By the side of the dairy a flight of steps lead upstairs.

In the kitchen are Mrs. Poyser and Dinah Morris. Mrs. Poyser stands in the open door in bright sunshine, busily knitting a gray stocking at which she seldom glances. Mrs. Poyser is a good-looking matron of thirty-eight, of fair complexion and dark hair, well-shaped, light-footed. She wears a plain dark gown and a white cap with a little frill around her face. The most conspicuous article of her attire is a big, checkered linen apron, which almost covers her skirt. Her eyes are very keen and are constantly glancing about from the dairy to the yard and back again, as though looking for dust or careless servants. She only melts at sight of her little daughter, Totty. Her tongue is not less keen than her eye. She steps quickly and lightly and her voice is sharp.

Dinah Morris, her niece, is seated mending a sheet. Dinah resembles her aunt in complexion, but is paler and her expression is of the utmost mildness. Dinah is twenty-five, wears a perfectly plain black gown and a white net cap, severely plain, high-crowned and without a border. Dinah's dark hair is parted in the middle and brought down smoothly over her ears. Her eyes

are clear and her voice extremely soft and gentle and sweet.

Occasionally a young girl passes across the wide opening of the dairy. The girl is but seventeen and distractingly pretty. Her curling hair shows beneath her coquettishly fluted cap. Hetty's cheeks are pink as a rose petal, her dark lashes are long, she has dimples in cheeks and arms. She wears a low bodice of plum-colored cloth, with a white neckerchief spotted with pink, which is tucked inside her bodice. Her ankle-length skirt is of the plum-colored cloth, almost covered with a big linen butter-making apron with a bib. She wears brown stockings and neat little shoes with large square steel buckles. Her sleeves are turned up above the elbows. She tosses the butter she is making with pretty and graceful gestures, with great play of her pouting lips and much making of eyes. She makes little patting and rolling movements with the palm of her hand and the butter is like marble under a pale yellow light. As she works she sings snatches of "Walking in the Dew Makes the Milk Maids Fair"—old English.

Mrs. Poyser comes and sits down opposite Dinah and looks at her with meditative eyes, knitting automatically, while Hetty works and sings.)

MRS. POYSER.

You look th' image o' your Aunt Judith, Dinah, when you sit a-sewing. I could almost fancy it was thirty years back, and I was a little gell at home, looking at Judith as she sat at her work, after she'd done th' house up.

DINAH.

She was a blessed woman. God had given her a loving, self-forgetting nature, and he perfected it by grace. She used to say, "You'll have a friend on earth in your Aunt Rachel, if I'm taken away from you; for she has a kind heart;" and I'm sure I've found it so.

MRS. POYSER.

I don't know how, child; anybody ud' be cunning to do anything for you; you're like the birds o' th' air, and live nobody knows how. I'd ha' been glad to behave to you like a mother's sister, if you'd come and live i' this country, where there's some shelter and victual for man and beast, and folks don't live on the naked hills, like

poultry a-scratching on a gravel bank. But where's the use o' talking, if you wanna be persuaded and settle down like any other woman in her senses, i' stead o' wearing yourself out, with walking and preaching. And all because you've got notions i' your head about religion more nor what's i' the Catechism and the Prayer-book.

DINAH.

But not more than what's in the Bible, aunt.

MRS. POYSER (sharply.)

Yes, and the Bible, too, for that matter, else why shouldn't them as know best what's in the Bible—the parsons and people as have got nothing to do but learn it—do the same as you do? But, for the matter o' that, if everybody was to do like you, the world must come to a standstill, and everybody 'ud be running after everybody else to preach to 'em, i' stead o' bringing up their families, and laying by against a bad harvest. It stands to sense as that can't be the right religion.

DINAH.

Nay, dear aunt, you never heard me say that all people are called to forsake their work and their families. We can all be servants of God, wherever our lot is cast, but he gives us different sorts of work, according as he fits us for it and calls us to do it. I can no more help spending my life in trying to do what I can for the souls of others than you could help running if you heard little Totty crying at the other end of the house; the voice would go to your heart, and you couldn't rest running to help her and comfort her.

MRS. POYSER.

(Rising and walking towards the door, still knitting.)

I know it 'ud be just the same if I was to talk to you for hours. You'd make me the same answer at the end. I might as well talk to the running brook and fell it to stan' still.

(In a flurried, awe-struck tone.)

If there isn't Captain Donnithorne and Mr. Irwine a-coming into the yard. I'll lay my life they're coming to speak about your preaching on the Green, Dinah; it's

you must answer 'em, for I'm dumb. I've said enough a'ready about your bringing such disgrace upo' your uncle's family. I wouldn't ha' minded if you'd been Mr. Poyser's own piece; folks must put up wi' their own kin as they put up wi' their own noses—it's their own flesh and blood. But to think of a niece o' mine being cause o' my husband's being turned out o' his farm.

DINAH (*interrupting gently.*)

Nay, dear Aunt Rachel, you have no cause for such fears. I've strong assurance that no evil will happen to you and my uncle from anything I've done. I didn't preach without direction.

MRS. POYSER.

(*Knitting in a rapid, agitated manner.*)

Direction! I know very well what you mean by direction. When there's a bigger maggot than usual in your head you call it "direction," and then nothing can stir you. I hanna common patience with you.

(*Mrs. Poyser goes out onto the doorstep curtsying low and repeatedly, trembling between her anger at Dinah and her anxiety to conduct herself with perfect propriety on this important occasion.*)

Mr. Irwine enters with stately cordiality. He is a rather stout man of about 50, with a ruddy complexion, a finely cut profile, a genial face and powdered hair tied with a black ribbon. He wears clerical dress and carries a riding whip. He is a jovial, hearty, well-fed man of the world in contrast to Dinah's spirituality.

Captain Arthur Donnithorne, who enters just behind him, is not yet twenty-one, with a clean-shaven face, soft brown hair, a tall well-set figure. He wears a striped waist coat, a long-tailed coat and low boots, and carries a riding whip also.)

MR. IRWINE.

Well, Mrs. Poyser, how are you after this stormy morning. Our feet are quite dry; we shall not soil your beautiful floor.

MRS. POYSER.

Oh, sir, don't mention it. Will you and the captain please to walk into the parlor?

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

(Looking eagerly around the kitchen as though he were looking for something he did not find.)

No, indeed, thank you, Mrs. Poyser. I delight in your kitchen. I think it is the most charming room I know. I should like every farmer's wife to come and look at it for a pattern.

(Dinah rises as the gentlemen come in, still keeping hold of her sheet, and curtsies respectfully. She seats herself when the gentlemen seat themselves. Mr. Irwine draws a chair close to hers and looks at her intently, occasionally addressing her. She replies in monosyllables, and continues to sew. Their conversation is inaudible to the audience.)

MRS. POYSER.

(Relieved a little by this compliment and the captain's evident good humor, but still glancing anxiously at Mr. Irwine.)

Oh! you're pleased to say so, sir: pray take a seat.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

(Seating himself where he can see into the dairy.)

Poyser isn't at home is he?

MRS. POYSER.

No, sir, he isn't; he's gone to Rosseter to see about the wool.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

(Still looking into the dairy. Hetty's song comes at intervals. She is invisible.)

Well, I'll just look at the whelps, and leave a message about them to your shepherd. I must come another day and see your husband. I want to have a consultation with him about horses. Do you know when he's likely to be at liberty?

MRS. POYSER.

Why, sir, you can hardly miss him, excepts it's o' Tred-des'on market day—that's of a Friday, you know; for if he's anywhere on the farm we can send for him in a minute.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

By the by, I've never seen your dairy. I must see your dairy, Mrs. Poyser.

MRS. POYSER.

Indeed sir, it's not fit for you to go in. Hetty's in the middle o' making the butter, for the churning was thrown late, and I'm quite ashamed.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

Oh, I've no doubt it's in capital order. Take me in.
(He leads the way. Mrs. Poyser follows. Hetty meets them at the door, curtsying deeply. They disappear within the dairy.)

MR. IRWINE.

And have you been long in the habit of preaching?

DINAH.

I first took to the work four years since, when I was twenty-one.

MR. IRWINE.

Your society sanctions women's preaching then?

DINAH.

It doesn't forbid them, sir, when they've a clear call to the work, and when their ministry is owned by the conversion of sinners and the strengthening of God's people.

MR. IRWINE.

Tell me—if I may ask, and I am really interested in knowing it—how you first came to think of preaching?

DINAH.

Indeed, sir, I didn't think of it at all—I'd been used from the time I was sixteen to talk to the little children and teach them, and sometimes I had had my heart enlarged to speak in class, and was much drawn out in prayer with the sick. But I felt no call to preach. I was called to preach quite suddenly, and since then I have never been left in doubt about the work that was laid upon me.

MR. IRWINE.

But tell me the circumstances—just how it was, the very day you began to preach.

DINAH.

(Letting fall her work for the first time and standing with a rapt expression, her hands clasped.)

It was one Sunday I walked with Brother Marlowe, who was an aged man, one of the local preachers, all the way to Hetton-Deeps—that's a village where the people get their living by working in the lead mines, and where there's no church nor preacher, but they live like sheep without a shepherd. Before we got to Hetton, Brother Marlowe was seized with dizziness, for he overworked himself sadly at his years, in watching and praying, and walking so many miles to speak the Word, as well as carrying on his trade of linen-weaving. And when we got to the village the people were expecting him, and many of them were assembled on a spot where the cottages were thickest. But he was forced to lie down in the first we came to. So I went to tell the people, thinking we'd go into one of the houses, and I would read and pray with them. But as I passed along by the cottages and saw the aged trembling women at the doors, and the hard looks of the men, who seemed to have their eyes no more filled with the sight of the Sabbath morning than if they had been dumb oxen that never looked up to the sky, I felt a great movement in my soul, and I trembled as if I was shaken by a strong spirit entering into my weak body. And I spoke the words that were given to me abundantly. And they came round me out of all the cottages, and many wept over their sins. That was the beginning of my preaching, sir, and I've preached ever since.

MR. IRWINE.

(After a decided pause.)

Some of our most intelligent workmen about here are Methodists and think as you do. I dare say you know the Cranages. They are Methodists.

DINAH.

Yes, I know them well—sincere and without offense.

MR. IRWINE.

Perhaps you don't know the trouble that has just happened to them? Their father was drowned in the Willow Brook last night. I'm going now to see them.

DINAH.

(With pitying eyes.)

Oh, the poor mother. She will mourn heavily. I must go and see if I can give her any help.

(She rises and begins to fold her work.)

MR. IRWINE.

(Looking out the open door.)

There goes Luke, and I promised my sister to see him about his poultry. Mrs. Poyser has some beautiful speckled hens. I hear you are going away soon; but this will not be the last visit you will pay your aunt—so we shall meet again, I hope.

DINAH.

Goodby, sir.

(She goes up the stairs as Mr. Irwine goes out the door. Mrs. Poyser, Captain Donnithorne and Hetty appear from the dairy.)

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

I hope you will be ready for a great holiday on the thirtieth of July, Mrs. Poyser, when I come of age. I shall expect you to be one of the guests who come earliest and leave latest. Will you promise me your hand for two dances, Miss Hetty? If I don't get your promise now, I know I shall hardly have a chance, for all the smart young farmers will take care to secure you.

(Hetty blushes and casts down her eyes.)

MRS. POYSER.

(Interrupting quickly, before Hetty has time to answer.)

Indeed, sir, you're very kind to take that notice of her. And I'm sure whenever you're pleased to dance with her she'll be proud and thankful, if she stood still all the rest o' the evening.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

(Determined to make Hetty look at him.)

Oh, no, no, that would be too cruel to all the other young fellows who can dance. But you will promise me two dances won't you?

HETTY.

(Dropping a very pretty little curtsey and glancing up half-shyly, half-coquettishly.)

Yes; thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

And you must bring all your children, you know. Mrs. Poyser; your little Totty, as well as the boys. I want all the youngest children on our estate to be there—all those who will be fine young men and women when I'm a bald old fellow.

MRS. POYSER.

Oh dear, sir, that 'ull be a long time first.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

But where IS Totty today? I want to see her.

MRS. POYSER.

Where is the little 'un, Hetty? She came in here not long ago.

HETTY.

She went into the brewhouse to Nancy, I think.

(Mrs. Poyser hurries out of the door.)

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

And do you carry the butter to market when you've made it?

HETTY.

Oh, no, sir; not when it's so heavy. I'm not strong enough to carry it. Alick takes it on horseback.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

No, I'm sure your pretty arms were never meant for such heavy weights. But you go out for a walk sometimes these pleasant evenings, don't you? Why don't you have a walk in the Chase sometimes, now it's so green and pleasant? I hardly ever see you anywhere except at home and church.

HETTY.

(Lifting her eyes archly.)

Aunt doesn't like me to go a-walking only when I'm going somewhere. But I go through the Chase sometimes.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

And don't you ever go to see Mrs. Best, our housekeeper? I think I saw you once in the housekeeper's room.

HETTY.

It isn't Mrs. Best, it's Mrs. Pomfret, the lady's maid, as I go to see. She's teaching me tent-stitch and lace-mending. I'm going to tea with her tomorrow afternoon.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

Do you go every week to see Mrs. Pomfret?

HETTY.

Yes, sir; every Thursday.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

And she's teaching you something, is she?

HETTY.

Yes, sir, the lace-mending as she learned abroad, and the stocking-mending—it looks just like the stocking, you can't tell it's been mended; and she teaches me cutting-out, too.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

Are YOU going to be a lady's maid?

HETTY.

I should like to be one very much indeed.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

I suppose Mrs. Pomfret always expects you at a certain hour?

HETTY.

Yes; about four. That gives us time before Miss Donnithorne's bell rings.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

Do you always come back through the Chase in the evening, or are you afraid over so lonely a road?

HETTY.

Oh, no, sir, it's never late; I always set out by eight o'clock, and it's so light now in the evening. My aunt would be angry with me if I didn't get home before nine.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

Perhaps Craig, the gardener, comes to take care of you?

HETTY.

(Very hastily.)

I'm sure he doesn't. I'm sure he never did. I wouldn't

let him. I don't like him.

(A tear of vexation drops down her cheek.)

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

(Putting his arm around her, his voice very gentle.)

Why, Hetty, what makes you cry? I didn't mean to vex you. I wouldn't vex you for the world, you little blossom. Come, don't cry; look at me, else I shall think you won't forgive me.

(He lays his hand on the arm nearer him and stoops with a look of entreaty.)

See, here is something I got for you at Rosseter the last time I was there. I know you like pretty things. There's room for another lock of hair in it—and yours is such a pretty color. You must always think of me when you look at it. But don't let your aunt see it. She has sharp eyes.

(He slips a gold locket into Hetty's hand as he speaks.)

HETTY.

Oh, how kind of you, sir. How beautiful it is.

(She smiles delightedly and runs to see the effect of the locket against her throat, as reflected in the shining doors of the cupboard. She drops it hastily into her apron pocket and turns around as a noise is heard at the door.)

MR. IRWINE.

(Just showing his head inside the door.)

Come along Arthur. I must be off.

CAPTAIN DONNITHORNE.

Just ride slowly on, Irwine. I'll overtake you in three minutes. I'm going to speak to the shepherd about the whelps. Goodby, Hetty; tell Mr. Poyser I shall come and have a long talk with him soon.

(Hetty curtsies, the captain goes out and Hetty goes into the dairy. Dinah comes downstairs with her bonnet on and Mrs. Poyser enters from the back yard.)

MRS. POYSER.

Wheriver is that Totty? In the curran' bushes, I'll be bound. So, Dinah, Mr. Irwine wasn't angry, then. Didn't he scold you for preaching?

DINAH.

No, he was not angry at all. He was very friendly to me. I was quite drawn out to speak to him.

MRS. POYSER.

But what's your bonnet on for?

DINAH.

Mr. Irwine told me something that I'm sure will cause you sorrow. Thias Cranage was drowned last night in the Willow Brook, and I'm thinking that the aged mother will be greatly in need of comfort.

MRS. POYSER.

(In a gentler tone.)

Dear heart! Dear heart! But you must have a cup of tea first, child.

DINAH.

I musn't stop now, aunt. She may be needing me. I'll be back tomorrow.

(Dinah goes out.)

MRS. POYSER.

Hetty, d'you hear what's happened?

HETTY.

(Coming from the dairy.)

No; how should I hear anything?

MRS. POYSER.

Not as you'd care much, I dare say, if you did hear; for you're too feather-headed to mind if everybody was dead, so as you could stay up-stairs a-dressing yourself for two hours by the clock. Poor Thias Cranage was drowned last night in Willow Brook.

HETTY.

(Trying to look serious.)

Oh, how dreadful!

(She smiles at her image reflected in the glass doors of the cupboard, takes off her cap and fluffs her hair.)

MRS. POYSER.

And I want you to go out right away and look for Totty. wonder the blessed child isn't drowned long ago, so little care as you take of her. And while you're there,

go and look at the curran's. I doubt not that the children have eaten more than they've picked.

(Hetty goes out without making a reply. Mrs. Poyser goes into the dairy, but remains in view of the audience. She is crushing a cheese. A knock at the door.)

ADAM BEDE (outside.)

Mrs. Poyser within?

(Adam is a stalwart fellow, 26 years old, six feet tall, with dark curling hair, keen dark eyes, prominent and mobile eyebrows. He wears a paper cap, leather breeches and blue worsted stockings and carries a box or basket of tools on his shoulder.)

MRS. POYSER (from the dairy.)

Come in, Mr. Bede, come in. Come into the dairy, if you will, for I canna justly leave the cheese.

(Adam walks toward the dairy and stands in the entrance.)

MRS. POYSER.

Why, you might think you was come to a dead-house. They're all i' the meadow; but Martin's sure to be in before long, for they're leaving the hay cocked tonight, ready for carrying first thing tomorrow. And I've been forced t' gether the red curran's tonight. The fruit always ripens so contrary just when every hand's wanted. Hetty's seein' to it, for there's no trustin' the children to gether it, for they put more into their mouths nor into the basket; you might as well set the wasps to gether the fruit.

ADAM.

I could be looking at your spinning wheel then, and see what wants doing to it. Perhaps it stands in the house where I can find it.

MRS. POYSER.

No, I've put it away, but let it be till I can fetch it an' show it you. I'd be glad now if you'd go into the garden, and tell Hetty to send Totty in. I know Hetty's lettin' her eat too many curran's, and there's the York an' Lankester roses beautiful in the garden now—you'll like to see 'em. But you'd like a drink o' whey first, p'r'aps; I know you're fond o' whey, as most folks is when they hanna got to crush it out.

ADAM.

Thank you, Mrs. Poyser, a drink o' whey is allays a treat to me. I'd rather have it than beer any day.

MRS. POYSER.

(Reaching a small white basin from the shelf and dipping it into the whey tub.)

Ay, ay, the smell o' bread's sweet t' everybody but the baker. A farmhouse is a fine thing for them as look on, an' don't know the liftin' an' the stannin', an' the worritin' o' the inside as belongs to't.

ADAM.

Why, Mrs. Poyser, you wouldn't like to live any place else but in a farm-house, so well as you manage it.

(Takes the basin.)

Here's to your health, and may you allers have strength to look after your own dairy, and set a pattern t' all the farmers' wives in the country.

MRS. POYSER.

(As Adam sets down the basin.)

Have a little more, Mr. Bede.

ADAM.

No, thank you. I'll go into the garden now and send in the little lass.

(Adam goes out. Mrs. Poyser continues her work in the dairy. Mr. Poyser comes in, his two sons of 9 and 7 behind him and Bartle Massey, the schoolmaster, with him. The boys have very rosy cheeks and black eyes, and wear little fustian-tailed coats and knee breeches. Mr. Poyser wears a suit of drab, with a red and green waistcoat. His watch ribbon is green with a carnelian seal attached and hangs pendent like a plumb-line from the promontory where his watch pocket is situated. He wears grey-ribbed stockings, and a silk handkerchief of a dull yellow about his neck.

Bartle Massey has an aquiline nose, and a transparent yellow skin and in his forehead the blue veins are prominent. His forehead is high and is surrounded by thick, bushy, grey hair, about an inch long. He wears spectacles, and walks with a knotted stick. Though quite lame, he still walks very briskly. His face is rather irritable.)

MR. POYSER.

Rachel, here's Mr. Massey, as I've brought home to supper. I hope you've got one o' your stuffed chines.

MRS. POYSER.

(Coming from the dairy.)

How d' do, how d' do, Mr. Massey. Mr. Bede's here, Poyser, and as soon as Molly and me can get ready, we'll have supper, for I know you're tired and hungry.

MR. POYSER.

That I am, Rachel. Rosseter is pretty far.

(Poyser and Bartle Massey seat themselves and the boys stand by Mr. Massey, who talks to them. During the subsequent dialogue, Mrs. Poyser and Molly, who enters from the dairy, let down the table leaf, pull it out and commence to set the table and put out the supper things.)

MR. POYSER.

How's the milk from the new short-horn, Rachel?

MRS. POYSER.

I've twice as much butter from that little yallow cow as doesn't give half the milk.

MR. POYSER.

Why, thee't not like the women in general; they like the short-horns, as give such a lot o' milk. There's Chowne's wife wants him to buy no other sort.

MRS. POYSER.

What's it sinnify what Chowne's wife likes? A poor soft thing, wi' no more head-piece nor a sparrow. She'd take a big cullender to strain her lard wi', and then wonder as the scratchin's run through. Her cheese rose like a loaf in a tin last year, an' then she talks o' the weather bein' i' fault, as there's folks 'ud stand on their heads and then say the fault was i' their boots.

MR. MASSEY.

I dare say, she's like the rest o' the women—thinks two and two'll come to make five if she bothers enough about it.

MRS. POYSER.

Ay, ay, one 'ud think, an' hear some folks talk, as the

men war cute enough to count the corns in the bag o' wheat wi' only smelling at it. They can see through a barn door, THEY can. Perhaps that's the reason they see so little o' this side on't.

(Martin Foyser shakes with delighted but silent laughter.)

MR. MASSEY.

(Smilingly.)

Ah, the women are quick enough—they're quick enough. They know the rights of a story before they hear it, and can tell a man what his thoughts are before he knows 'em himself.

MRS. POYSER.

Like enough, for the men are mostly so slow, their thoughts overrun 'em an' they only catch 'em by the tail. I can count a stocking-top while a man's getting's tongue ready; an' when he outs wi' his speech at last, there's little broth to be made on't. It's your dead chicks take the longest hatchin'. However, I'm not denyin' the women are foolish: God Almighty made 'em to match the men.

MR. MASSEY.

Match! Ay, as vinegar matches one's teeth. If a man says a word his wife'll match it with a contradiction; if he's a mind for hot meat, his wife'll match him with whimpering. She's such a match as th' horse-fly is to th' horse; she's got the right venom to sting him with—the right venom to sting him with.

MRS. POYSER.

Yes, I know what the men like—a poor soft as 'ud simper at 'em like the picture o' the sun, whether they did right or wrong, an' say thank you' for a kick, an' pretend she dinna know which end she stood uppermost, till her husband told her. That's what a man wants in a wife mostly; he wants to make sure 'o one fool as'll tell him he's wise. But there's some men can do wi'out that—they think so much o' themselves a'ready; an' that's how it is there's old bachelors.

MR. POYSER.

(Jocosely, and looking admiringly at his wife.)

Come, Bartle, you mun get married pretty quick, else

you'll be set down for an old bachelor; an' you see what the women'll think on you. Now I like a woman o' spirit—a cliverish woman—a managing woman.

MR. MASSEY.

You're out there, Poyser, you're out there. You judge o' your own garden stuff on a better plan than that: you pick the things for what they can excel in—for what they can excel in. You don't value your peas for their roots, or your carrots for their flowers. Now that's the way you should choose women; their cleverness'll never come to much—never come to much; but they make excellent simpletons, ripe, and strong-flavored.

MR. POYSER.

(Throwing himself back and looking merrily at his wife.)

What dost say to that?

MRS. POYSER.

(A dangerous fire kindling in her eyes.)

Say! Why, I can see a cat i' the dairy wi'out wondering what she's come for. Some folk's tongues are like the clocks as run on strikin', not to tell you the time o' day, but because there's summat wrong i' their own inside.

(Totty comes running in, in a pink pinafore, stained with currants. Her mouth and hands are also stained. Mrs. Poyser stops and her voice changes as she stoops to pick up Totty.)

Bless her sweet face! The child's allays i' mischief if your back's turned a minute. What shall I do to you, you naughty, naughty gell? Molly, take the child and put her to bed. She's too full of curran's to want her supper.

(Molly goes upstairs with Totty in her arms. Adam Bede and Hetty come in together at the door. Adam carries a big basket of currants, which he sets down. He shakes hands with Mr. Poyser and Bartle Massey and Hetty curtsies to the school-master.)

MR. POYSER.

Well, Adam, I'm glad to see ye. What, ye've been helping Hetty to gether the currants, eh? Come, sit ye down, sit ye down. Why, it's pretty near a three-week since

y' had your supper wi' us; and the missis has got one of her rare stuffed chines. I'm glad ye're come.

(Mr. Poyser and Bartle Massey talk together, while Mrs. Poyser goes on arranging the supper table.)

ADAM.

(Taking a rose from his coat and handing it to Hetty.)

How pretty the roses are now! See! I stole the prettiest, but I didna mean to keep it myself. Stick it in your frock, and then you can put it in water after. It 'ud be a pity to let it fade.

(Hetty smiles as she takes the rose. She is without her cap now, and she sticks the rose in her curly hair just above the left ear, and looks at Adam coquettishly.)

ADAM.

(Looking displeased.)

Ah, that's like the ladies in the pictures at the Chase. They've mostly got flowers, or gold things i' their hair, but somehow I don't like to see 'em; they allays put me i' mind o' the painted woman outside the shows at Tred-dles'on fair. What can a woman have to set her off better than her own hair, when it curls so, like yours? If a woman's young and pretty, I think you can see her good looks all the better for her being plain dressed. Why, Dinah Morris looks very nice, for all she wears such a plain cap and gown. It seems to me as a woman's face doesna want flowers; it's almost like a flower itself. (tenderly) I'm sure yours is.

HETTY.

(Pouting and taking the rose out of her hair.)

Oh, very well. I'll put one o' Dinah's caps on, and you'll see if I look better in it.

ADAM.

(Anxiously.)

Nay, nay, I don't want you to wear a Methodist cap like Dinah's. I dare say it's a very ugly cap, and I used to think as it was nonsense for her to dress different t' other people; but I never rightly noticed her till last night, and then I thought the cap seemed to fit her face somehow as th' acorn-cap fits th' acorn, and I shouldn't

like to see her so well without it. But you've got another sort o' face; I'd have you just as you are now, without anything to interfere with your own looks.

MRS. POYSER.

Hetty, run upstairs, and send Molly down. She's putting Totty to bed, and I want her to draw th' ale, for Nancy's busy yet i' the dairy. You can see to the child. But whatever did you let her run away from you along wi' Tommy for, and stuff herself wi' fruit as she can't eat a bit o' good victual?

MRS. POYSER.

Come Mr. Bede, come Mr. Massey. I'm sure ye've been waiting long enough.

(They seat themselves, the boys at either side of their mother, with a place for Hetty between her uncle and Adam Bede. All the company except Mr. Poyser have their backs or sides toward the outer door. Molly comes downstairs and goes out the door as they sit down to supper.)

MRS. POYSER.

(Dispensing slices of stuffed chine (backbone of beef), cold veal and fresh lettuce. The table cloth is of whitey-brown homespun and the service of shining pewter.)

What a time that gell is drawing th' ale, to be sure. I think she sets the jug under and forgets to turn the tap, as there's nothing you can't believe o' them wenches; they'll set th' empty kettle on the fire' and then come an hour after to see if the water boils.

MR. POYSER.

Perhaps she's drawing for the men, too. Thee shouldst ha' told her to bring our jug first.

MRS. POYSER.

Told her? Yis I might spend all the wind i' my body, an' take the bellows, too, if I was to tell them gells everything as their own sharpness wonna tell'em. Mr. Massey, will you take some vinegar with your lettuce? Ay, you're i' the right not. It spoils the flavor o' the chine, to my thinking. It's poor eating where the flavor o' the meat lies i' the cruets. There's folks as make bad butter, and trusten to the salt t' hide it.

(Molly enters carrying a large jug, two small mugs and four drinking cans, all full of ale. Her mouth is wide open as she walks with her eyes fixed on the double cluster of vessels in her hands.)

MRS. POYSER.

(Severely.)

Molly, I niver knew your equils—to think o' your poor mother as is a widow, an' I took you wi' as good a' no character, an' the time an' 'times I've told you.

(Molly starts and hastens her steps toward a far table where she may set down her cans, catches her foot in her apron and falls with a crash into a pool of beer. There is a tittering explosion from the two small boys. Mr. Poyser ejaculates, "Ello," and Bartle Massey settles back in his chair with an "I-told-you-so" expression.)

MRS. POYSER.

(In a cutting tone, rising and going toward the cupboard, while Molly with a doleful face begins to pick up the pieces of crockery.)

There you go! It's what I told you 'ud come over and over again; and there's your month's wage gone, an' more, to pay for the jug as I've had i' the house this ten year, and nothing ever happened to 't before; but the crockery you've broke sin' here in th' house you've been 'ud make a parson swear—God forgi' me for saying so. Anybody'd think you'd got the St. Vitus' dance, to see the things you've thrown down.

(Molly begins to cry, and as the beer is flowing toward the feet of the guests converts her apron into a mop.

MRS. POYSER opening the cupboard and turning a blighting eye upon her.)

Ah, you'll do no good wi' crying an' making more wet to wipe up. It's all your own wilfulness, as I tell you, for there's nobody no call to break anything if they'll go the right way to work. But wooden folks would need ha' wooden things t' handle. And here must I take the brown-and-white jug, as it's never been used three times this year and go down i' th cellar myself.

(Mrs. Poyser turns round from the cupboard with a brown-and-white jug in her hand. She stares at the farther end of the kitchen, where Hetty has appeared like a

wraith in Dinah's prim cap and gown with her hair parted and smoothed down. The jug falls to the ground, parting forever from its spout and handle. The others have not seen Hetty. The boys laugh loudly at their mother.)

MRS. POYSER.

(In a lowered tone, with a moment's bewildered glance around the room.)

Did iver anybody see the like? The jugs are bewitched, I think. It's them nasty glazed handles—they slip o'er the finger like a snail.

MR. POYSER.

(Joining in the laugh.)

Why, thees't let thy own whip fly in thy face.

MRS. POYSER (angrily.)

It's all very fine to look on and grin, but there's times when the crockery seems alive, an' flies out o' your hand like a bird. What is to be broke will be broke, for I never dropped a thing i' my life for want o' holding it, else I should never have kept the crockery all these years as I bought at my own wedding. And, Hetty, are you mad? Whativer do you mean by coming down i' that way, and making one think as there's a ghost a-walking i' th' house?

(There is a fresh outbreak of laughter during Mrs. Poyser's speech, as all turn and look at Hetty. The boys leave their chairs and dance around Hetty, jumping and clapping their hands. During the confusion Mrs. Poyser reaches down a great pewter measure from the cupboard. This she hands to Molly who is going out with fragments of her mugs.)

MR. POYSER.

(Chuckling.)

Why, Hetty, lass, are ye turned Methodis? You must pull your face a deal longer before you'll do for one; mustna she, Adam? How come ye to put them things on, eh?

HETTY.

(Who has seated herself demurely.)

Adam said he liked Dinah's cap and gown better nor my clothes. He says folk look better in ugly clothes.

ADAM.

(Looking at her admiringly.)

Nay, nay. I only said they seemed to suit Dinah. But if I'd said you'd look pretty in 'em I should ha' said nothing but what was true.

MR. MASSEY.

(To Mrs. Poyser, who has seated herself.)

Why, you thought Hetty war a ghost; you look'd as scared as scared.

MRS. POYSER.

(With acidity.)

It little sinnifies how I looked. Looks 'ull mend no jugs, nor laughing neither, as I see. Mr. Bede, I'm sorry you've to wait so long for your ale, but it's coming in a minute. Make yourself at home wi' the cold potatoes, Mr. Massey, I know you like 'em. Tommy, I'll send you to bed this minute, if you don't give over laughing. What is there to laugh at, I should like to know? I'd sooner cry nor laugh at the sight o' that poor thing's cap; and there's them as 'ud be better if they could make their-selves like her i' more ways nor putting on her cap. It little becomes anybody i' this house to make fun o' my sister's child, an' I know one thing as if trouble was to come, (tears in her voice) we might be glad to get sight o' Dinah's cap again, wi' her own face under it, border or no border. For she's one o' them things as looks the brightest on a rainy day, and loves you the best when you're most i' need on't.

MR. POYSER.

(To Hetty.)

You'd better take the things off again, my lass; it hurts your aunt to see 'em.

(Hetty goes upstairs. Molly brings in the ale and pours it and leaves the stage.)

MRS. POYSER.

You heerd about poor Thias Cranage, Mr. Bede? Dinah's gone to the poor mother, though I doubt not that his death's a relief to the family, and he such a drunkard. (To her husband). An' Captain Donnithorne

and Mr. Irwine were here today. The captain was most pleasant, and Mr. Irwine was that agreeable to Dinah. When I saw 'em-a-comin' I'd no doubt but they'd come to chide her for preaching on the green. The captain insisted on seein' the dairy.

MR. POYSER.

I'll warrant he said that Mrs. Satchell's cream and butter woudn't bear comparison with yours.

MRS. POYSER.

Well, he did say summat like that, and I told him that I couldn't say, as I seldom saw other folks' butter—though there's some on it as one's no need to see—the smell's enough.

MR. MASSEY.

Mr. Irwine must a' been surprised to see Dinah so young and comely. He likes the young people.

MR. POYSER.

It's a poor look-out when th' ould folks doesna like the young uns.

MRS. POYSER.

Ay, it's ill livin' in a hen-roost for them as doesn't like fleas. We've all had our turn at bein' young, I reckon.

(Adam rises from the table, as does Mr. Massey. Hetty is just coming down stairs.)

ADAM.

I shall go a step farther, to see Mester Burge, for he wasn't at church, and I've not seen him for a week past. I've never hardly known him to miss church before.

MRS. POYSER.

But you'll never think o' going there at this hour o' the night?

(It is still twilight, about 8 o'clock.)

ADAM.

Oh, Mr. Burge sits up late. He's never in bed till it's gone eleven.

MRS. POYSER.

I wouldna have him live wi' me, then, a-dropping

candle-grease about, as you're like to tumble down o' the floor the first thing i' the morning.

MR. POYSER.

Ay, eleven o'clock's late—it's late. I ne'er sot up so i' my life, not to say as it warn a marr'in, or a christenin', or wake, or th' harvest supper. Eleven o'clock's late.

ADAM.

(Laughingly.)

Why, I sit up till after twelve often, but it isn't to eat and drink extry, it's to work extry.

ADAM AND MASSEY.

Goodnight, Mrs. Poyser. Goodnight, Hetty.

(Hetty smiles and shakes hands with them.)

MR. POYSER.

(Holding out a large hand.)

Come again, come again, both.

(Adam and Massey go out.)

MR. POYSER.

Ay, think o' that, now. Sitting up tiil past twelve to do extry work. Ye'll not find many men o' six-an'-twenty as 'ull do to put i' the shafts wi' him. If you catch Adam for a husband, Hetty, you'll ride 'i your own spring-cart some day, I'll be your warrant.

(Hetty tosses her head and puts her hand in her pocket where the locket is.)

MRS. POYSER.

Go eat your supper, Hetty.

HETTY.

I don't want any supper.

MRS. POYSER.

Why, what nonsense that is to talk. Do you think you can live wi'out eatin', and nourish your inside wi' stickin' red ribbons on your head? Go an' get your supper this minute, child.

(Hetty eats a little.)

MR. POYSER.

Come Rachel, thee't tired. It's time thee wast in bed. Thee't bring on the pain in thy side again.

MRS. POYSER.

Get me the matches down Hetty, for I must have the rushlight burning i' my room. You may make the door fast now Poyser. I declare, Tommy's asleep already.

MR. POYSER.

(Rolling the heavy wooden bolts in the house door winding the clock and looking to the shutters, while the twilight gathers. Hetty still lingers with a far-away glance.)

Come, Hetty, get to bed. You did na' mean any harm, but your aunt's been worritted today. Goodnight, my wench, **goodnight.**

(Mrs. Poyser is slowly ascending the stairs, with her arm around the sleepy Tommy. The other boy is rubbing his eyes. Martin Poyser follows his wife and children and Hetty goes last, taking out her locket to look at it, while the twilight deepens in the room, and

The Curtain Falls.

ACT II.

(PLACE—The entrance hall of Donnithorne Hall in Staffordshire. TIME—July 30, 1799. The lofty walls and ceiling are ornamented with stucco angels with trumpets and flower wreaths. Great medallions of heroes on the wall alternate with niches in which stand statues. The whole place is decorated with green boughs, for this is the night of the young squire's coming of age. At the right of the stage goes up to the second story a wide stone staircase, coming well out into the hall. The stairs are covered with cushions for the children and serving maids who are to sit here to see the dancing. The room is lit with many colored lamps hidden among the green boughs and giving an air of festivity. At the back of the stage is a raised dais on which the gentle people sit, and on it, as the curtain rises, is seen Miss Lydia Donnithorne, a slender maiden lady of about fifty and Arthur's aunt. She is elaborately gowned in a stiff yellow brocade with jewels. Mrs. Irwine, the mother of the rector, sits with her. Mrs. Irwine is seventy, exceedingly handsome and stately, with splendid rings on her old brown hands, a sweeping gown of lavender brocade and filmy black lace that falls over her white hair and veils her face and neck. The old Squire Donnithorne, a man of seventy, in black evening dress of the period and leaning on a stick, stands by the dais, which is bordered by hothouse plants. At the left rear of the stage is the entrance door, and at this door, as the curtain rises, stand Captain Arthur Donnithorne and Mr. Irwine receiving the tenants. Arthur wears the uniform of a Captain in the Staffordshire militia, and the rector is in black evening dress of the time. His hair is powdered and tied with a ribbon as before.

The tenants enter with much laughter. Their faces are slightly flushed, as they have just come from the tenant's dinner, also served at the Hall, of which they are talking. There are several well-to-do farmers with their wives and daughters, all well and gaily dressed—for only the principal tenants are

bidden to the dance. The servants and children are conducted to the stairway. The men and women are hatless, having left their outer wraps where they dined. First to enter and shake hands with the captain and rector are Bartle Massey and Adam Bede. Bartle and Adam wear their Sunday clothes, with long coats and knee breeches. Bartle's is black, Adam's brown. Both wear bright waistcoats and stockings, the color of their clothes. They salute the ladies on the dais and then come almost to the front of the stage, near the stairway and where the children are to sit, and facing the door by which the tenants are coming in. These do not come in so rapidly but what the two men have an opportunity for a few words of conversation.)

BARTLE MASSEY.

There's something in the wind—there's something in the wind. The Captain meant something by asking you here tonight Adam—you've never danced here before.

ADAM.

Why, yes; I'll tell you, because I believe you can keep a still tongue in your head if you like; and I hope you'll not let drop a word till it's common talk, for I've particular reasons against its being known.

BARTLE.

Trust to me, my boy, trust to me. I've got no wife to worm it out of me, and then run out and cackle it in everybody's hearing. If you trust a man let him be a bachelor—let him be a bachelor.

ADAM.

Well, then, it was so far settled yesterday, that I'm to take the management o' the woods. The captain sent for me, t' offer it me, and I've agreed to't. But if anybody asks any questions, just you take no notice, and turn the talk to something else, and I'll be obliged.

(During this the Poyser's have come in—Mr. and Mrs. Poyser, Hetty, the two boys and Molly with Totty. Mr. Poyser and the two boys are dressed as in the first act, but Mrs. Poyser wears an ample gown of the most vivid pea green poplin—a beautiful shade. Totty wears white and Hetty looks as though she were made of roses. Her frock has pink polka-dots (or roses)

sprinkled on a white cotton ground, her sleeves are short and her neck low and a fichu of real lace (white) is about her shoulders. She wears white silk stockings and little buckled shoes with red heels, and in her hair is a knot of black velvet ribbon and a pink rose. Her cheeks are very pink, her neck and arms very white; her hands not so white, for she does much work. Around her bare neck is a string of dark brown berries or beads which falls out of sight inside the front of her bodice.

Mr. Poyser joins Adam and Bartle. Molly and Hetty and the children go to the stairway. Mrs. Poyser talks with the other tenants' wives. During the conversation which follows, Totty is very cross and fractious and is handed from Molly to Hetty and back again. Both girls try vainly to quiet and amuse Totty, who is distinctly cross.)

MR. POYSER.

What's this I hear, Adam, what's this I hear about you and the woods? It's a fine step up in the world for you, my lad. You'll be your own master now, and soon be taking a wife.

ADAM.

(With a glance at Hetty.)

A working man 'ud be badly off without a wife to see to th' house and the victual and make things clean and comfortable.

BARTLE.

Nonsense, it's the silliest lie a sensible man like you ever believed, to say a woman makes a house comfortable. It's a story got up because the women are there and something must be found for 'em to do. I tell you that a woman'll bake a pie every week of her life and never come to see that the hotter the oven the shorter the time. I don't say but what God might have made Eve to be a companion of Adam in Paradise; there was no cooking to be spoiled there and no women to cackle with, though you see what mischief she did as soon as she'd an opportunity, but it's an impious, unscriptural opinion to say a woman's a blessing to a man now; you might as well say adders and wasps are a blessing, when they're only the evils that belong to a state

of probation, which it's lawful for a man to keep as clear of as he can i' this life, hoping to get quit of 'em forever in another—hoping to get quit of 'em forever in another.

ADAM.

Nay, Mr. Massey. don't be so hard on the creatures God has made to be companions for us (glancing at Hetty). God bless her! I'd make her life a happy 'un if a strong arm to work for her and a heart to love her could do it.

BARTLE.

(With a gesture that takes in the room.)

Oh, these women—they've got no headpieces to nourish, so their food all runs to fat or brats. Simple addition enough! Add one fool to another fool and in six years' time six fools more—they're all of one denomination, big and little's nothing to do with the sum.

(Mrs. Poyser joins the group.)

MR. POYSER.

Hast heard the news about Adam?

MRS. POYSER.

About the woods? Ay, I've long suspected it.

MR. POYSER.

Thee never saidst a word to me about it.

MRS. POYSER.

Well, I aren't like a bird-clapper, forced to make a rattle when the wind blows.

HETTY.

Oh, dear, aunt, I wish you'd speak to Totty; she keeps putting her legs up so and mussing my frock.

MRS. POYSER.

What's the matter wi' the child? She can niver please you. Let her come by the side o' me. I can put up with her.

(Draws Totty to her. Hetty turns smiling toward a young farmer who ust come up to her and chats with him.

Mrs. Poyser chats with her husband, the others having turned to speak to some of the arriving tenants.)

Hetty's no better nor a peacock, as 'ud strut about on the wall and spread its tail when the sun shone if all the folks i' the parish was dying; there's nothing seems to give her a turn i' th' inside, not even when we thought Totty had tumbled into the pit. It's what rag she can get to stick on her as she's thinking on from morning tiil night; as I often ask her if she wouldn't like to be the scare-crow i' the field, for then she'd be made o' rags inside and out. It's my belief her heart's as hard as a pibble.

MR. POYSER.

Nay, nay, thee mustn't judge Hetty too hard. Them young gells are like th' unripe grain—they'll take a good meal by and by, but they're squashy as yit. Thee't see Hetty'll be all right when she's got a good husband an' children of her own.

(They turn as the old squire comes up on his way around the hall. He bows punctiliously, and addresses them with elaborate civility.)

SQUIRE DONNITHORNE.

Good evening, Mrs. Poyser. I hope that your health is much improved. You must be sure to take the cold baths which I recommended to you and keep away from the drugs. That's what I do—keep away from the drugs.

MRS. POYSER.

(Curtesying deeply as the squire passes on.)

Your sarvant, sir. (To her husband.) I'll lay my life he's brewing some nasty turn against us. Old Harry doesna wag his tail so for nothin'.

(All the tenants having come in, Captain Donnithorne and the rector are making the round of the Hall, chatting with everybody. They pause before the group of the Poyzers and Massey and Adam.)

ARTHUR (to Mr. Poyser.)

Well, Poyser, that was a very fine speech you made at the dinner, and I tell you I shall always remember and try to live up to some of the things you said.

MR. POYSER.

Well, sir, as I said at dinner, "You speak fair and you act fair, an' we're joyful when we look forward to your

being our landlord, for we b'lieve you mean to do right by everybody an' 'ull make no man's bread bitter to him if you can help it."

ARTHUR DONNITHORNE (wincing a little.)

Weren't you pleased to hear your husband make such a good speech today, Mrs. Poyser?

MRS. POYSER.

Oh, sir, the men are mostly so tongue-tied—you're forced partly to guess what they mean, as you do wi' the dumb creeturs.

MR. IRWINE (laughing.)

What, you think you could have made it better for him?

MRS. POYSER.

Well, sir, when I want to say anything, I can mostly find words to say it in, thank God. Not as I'm a-finding faut wi' my husband, for, if he's a man o' few words, what he says he'll stand to.

(Arthur Donnithorne passes on to speak to the girls and children near the steps and stands near Hetty.)

MR. IRWINE.

How gracefully Arthur proposed his grandfather's health today, when we had all of us forgotten it.

MRS. POYSER.

Well, that's as you think. To my notion it's as well not to stir a kettle of sour broth.

(The musicians are heard tuning their instruments and the strains of a brisk country dance are heard. Most of the tenants fall back and stand close to the walls or sit on the seats around the walls.)

ARTHUR.

Mrs. Poyser, I'm come to request the favor of your hand for the first dance; and Mr. Poyser, you must let me take you to my aunt, for she claims you as her partner.

(Mrs. Poyser hands Totty to Molly. Four or six or couples join in the dance. Among them should be Miss Lydia Donnithorne with Mr. Poyser, Mrs. Poyser and Arthur Dennithorne, Adam Bede and

Hetty—the others are unnamed tenants. The dance is a country dance—a sort of modified lancers, of which the special feature is a ladies' chain—during which every man meets and swings every woman who is dancing. There is much merry stamping, a gracious nodding of the heads, a waving bestowal of the hand. Mr. Poyser has a holiday sprightliness and pays gallant little compliments to his wife when he meets her in the dance. Hetty and Adam should face the audience at the commencement of the dance with Arthur and Mrs. Poyser opposite them with their backs to the audience. The ladies move, while the gentlemen retain their places to swing the ladies as they come. (When it comes time for Arthur to balance with Hetty they are together at the center and front of the stage.)

ARTHUR (to Hetty, in a low and hurried tone.)

I shall be in the wood the day after tomorrow at seven;
come as early as you can.

(Hetty flushes and smiles up at him. When the dance is over Arthur conducts Mrs. Poyser, who is flushed and panting to a seat. Mills, the butler, brings her ice. Arthur devotes himself to the other tenants. After the dance, Adam has conducted Hetty over to the stairway where Totty has gone to sleep in Molly's arms. Molly gives Totty to Hetty and goes upstairs after the wraps.)

ADAM.

Let me hold her. The children are so heavy when
they're asleep.

(Hetty starts to hand Totty over to Adam, but this rouses Totty, who strikes out with one fist at Adam and with the other seizes the chain of beads around Hetty's neck. The string breaks and locket and beads fly wide over the floor.)

HETTY.

(In a loud, frightened whisper.)

My locket, my locket, never mind the beads.

ADAM.

(Picking up the locket.)

It isn't hurt.

HETTY.

Oh, it doesn't matter. I don't mind about it.

ADAM.

Not matter? You seemed very frightened about it. I'll hold it till you're ready to take it. (Molly comes back and takes Totty away.) Hetty, Hetty, whose is the hair inside? Is thee foolin' me, my girl, and you as good as my promised wife? Oh, Hetty, have you forgotten the night in the curran' bushes and what you said then, and just now, when I'm to have the woods and everything! Oh, Hetty, Hetty.

(Hetty buries her face in her hands, while Adam looks at her steadfastly. The band is playing softly, Arthur leads out another stout tenant's lady and the couples form for another dance as

The Curtain Falls.

ACT III.

TIME—August 1, 1799. PLACE—Mappleton, Staffordshire. The wood. At the back of the stage is a long vista of trees, and at the left a rustic building, the Hermitage. Seats are scattered among the trees. It is not yet twilight. The curtain rises as Hetty and Arthur Donnithorne come through the open door and down the steps of the Hermitage, his arm about her. Her hair is a bit dishevelled, and she has her bonnet and cape in her hands. Arthur helps her playfully to tie them on. They chat and smile and his manner is most affectionate. Hers is loving and trustful and full of wistful pride and shyness. Arthur is in evening dress. Hetty wears a pretty cotton frock and a little scoop bonnet with a wreath of pink roses inside. Her cape is a pretty shade of green and her bonnet is tied with wide rose-colored ribbon strings.)

ARTHUR.

Hasn't this summer been a little bit of heaven, Hetty? How I shall miss you when I'm in Windsor. But it's just as well, perhaps, that I'm called away, for sometime or other your aunt would be sure to suspect us and then there'd be the devil and all to pay. I don't doubt but what she'd go to my grandfather fast enough. Why, even Mr. Irwine has been taking me to task lately for admiring you too much and keeping off the young swains who adore those lovely eyes and sweet cheeks of yours.

HETTY.

But I'm sure I don't want any of them, sir. It's happiness enough for me to know that you love me, Captain Donnithorne, even if the other girls don't know it. But I just wish that Mary Burdge knew what you said—that you'd rather kiss me than any fine lady you ever saw, and that she knew that we'd met here in the wood twice every week these last two months.

ARTHUR (Hastily.)

But that wouldn't do at all, Hetty, and darling have you been very careful to remember never to show your locket, earrings or any of the trifles I've given you? I know you'd like to wear **them, vain little puss** (*pinching her cheek*), but I can't blame you. If I had such pretty ears as yours or such a beautiful neck (*kisses her throat*)—though really you need no adorning, beautiful one. You're quite bewitching enough to turn any head just as you are.

HETTY.

Indeed, Mr. Arthur, I've never shown my things to anyone, nor had them on except in my room at night, with the door locked and everyone asleep—much as I'd like to. What's the use of having things that you can't wear? (*pouting*). But one person's seen my locket, sir, and asked me about it.

ARTHUR (Surprised.)

Who was that? You never told me.

HETTY.

It was Adam Bede, the night of the coming of age. That ugly Totty pulled at my bead chain after the dancing and the locket fell to the oor. Adam was standin' by me and picked it up and couldn't help seein' that there was two kinds of hair in it—the dark and light. And then he turned it over and asked me who gave it me.

ARTHUR.

Insolent! And what did you say?

HETTY.

I didn't say anything, for just then aunt came up and we went home, and I haven't seen Adam alone since.

ARTHUR.

Oh, well, Adam's a good fellow. If anyone had to know, I'd rather it would be Adam. Now if it were Craig, the gardener, or somebody who would be jealous of me, I should mind it more. Besides, Adam would likely think you saved your money to buy it yourself—he knows nothing of the values of such things—and perhaps he'd think the hair was yours and that of your father or mother or someone.

HETTY.

(Tossing her head.)

Well, it don't matter much what he thinks so long as he doesn't tell aunt and uncle; but, oh, Mr. Arthur, how lonely it will be while you're in Windsor. And there'll be many pretty girls there, I doubt not. (wistfully.)

ARTHUR (Tenderly.)

But none so pretty as you, Hetty. Ah, little girl, you don't know how hard and fast you've twined yourself around my heart. Many and many a time I've resolved not to see you alone again and I've ridden Vixen most to death while I made good resolutions about not seeing you—and broken them within half a day. And you don't know the reason why I went away to Ellaston. But the real reason was to get away from you, and I made up my mind, oh ever so many times, that I wouldn't see you again, come what might. And the very first night after I came home, found me waiting here for you in the wood. You didn't come, either, and I can't ever remember being so disappointed since my first trousers failed to come from the tailor's. Strange what power to draw a man lies under long lashes and in scarlet, pouting lips.

(They are sitting on one of the benches now, and he kisses her.)

Why wasn't I born in a cottage, Hetty, or why weren't you born in the Hall, and then we might have married each other in the gray old church and been as happy as only you and I know how to be.

HETTIE (Coaxingly.)

But, sir, aren't we to be married? When you come back from Windsor, you'll marry me and make a lady of me, and I shall wear gold things on my head like the ladies in the pictures at the Chase, and, oh, I'd love you very much, I'm sure.

ARTHUR.

I'm sure you would, dear—love me as much as you have these delicious evenings in the wood and in the Hermitage, Hetty. Oh, you sweet little blossom, you. You

madden me and make me forget every rule of caste and every good resolution. It's only when I see your uncle and aunt that I've enough will power left to feel sorry. Then I feel like the deceitful brute I am. What would they say, Hetty, if they suspected?

HETTY.

But when I live at the Chase I shan't see them often, and I'm sure I don't care what they think. We might be married secretly like the doctor's niece and the apothecary's assistant, and then when they found it out it wouldn't matter what they thought, for it would be too late to do anything.

ARTHUR.

Well, we'll see, dear, we'll see WHEN I come home from Windsor. You must forget me while I'm away, sweet, and go to the harvest suppers and the dances, and have a good time with Luke Britton and all the likely young farmers, for I don't want my Hetty pale and pining. And now you must go home for it's getting late and your aunt will miss you, and will have more to say about your being too fond of Mrs. Pomfret and the servants at the Hall. I wish I could go all the way with you, Hetty, but you won't be afraid, dear, will you, for I don't think it's best for me to go beyond the trees. Hetty, tell me again that you love me. And then, a long, long kiss, for I shan't have any more kisses for a long while—not until I get back from Windsor.

(He folds her in his arms and they kiss lingeringly and passionately. They have risen from the seat and do not see Adam Bede approaching through the trees from the right with his tools on his shoulder. He sees them wrapped in each other's arms and halts in astonishment. He makes a slight noise. Hetty and Arthur start apart. Without looking to see who it is she runs swiftly from the stage to the left and Arthur turns to meet the intruder.)

Adam halts and waits for Arthur to come up to him. They make a striking contrast, Arthur in his evening clothes—Adam in his working garb. Arthur advances nonchalantly.)

ARTHUR.

(Laughing unnaturally.)

Well, Adam, you have been looking at the fine old

beeches, eh? They're not to be come near by the hatchet, though; this is a sacred grove. I overtook pretty little Hetty Sorrel as I was coming to my den—the Hermitage there. She ought not to come home this way so late. So I took care of her to the gate, and asked a kiss for my pains. But I must get back now, for this road is confoundedly damp. Good-night, Adam: I shall see you tomorrow—to say goodby, you know.

(He walks past Adam.)

ADAM.

(Without turning round, in a hard, peremptory tone.)

Stop a bit, sir. I've got a word to say to you.

ARTHUR (Haughtily.)

Adam, what do you mean?

ADAM.

(In the same harsh voice, still without turning around.)

I mean, sir, that you don't deceive me by your light words. This is not the first time you've met Hetty Sorrel in this grove, and this is not the first time you've kissed her.

ARTHUR.

Well, sir, what then?

ADAM.

Why, then, instead of acting like th' upright, honorable man we've all believed you to be, you've been acting the part of a selfish, light-minded scoundrel. You know, as well as I do, what it's to lead to, when a gentleman like you kisses and makes love to a young woman like Hetty, and gives her presents as she's frightened for other folks to see. And I say it again, you're acting the part of a selfish, light-minded scoundrel, though it cuts me to th' heart to say so, and I'd rather ha' lost my right hand.

ARTHUR.

(Trying to speak carelessly.)

Let me tell you, Adam, you're not only devilishly impertinent, but you're talking nonsense. Every pretty girl is not such a fool as you, to suppose that when a gentleman admires her beauty and pays her a little attention, he must mean something particular. Every man

likes to flirt with a pretty girl and every pretty girl likes to be flirted with. The wider the distance between them the less harm there is, for then she is not likely to deceive herself.

ADAM.

I don't know what you mean by flirting, but if you mean behaving to a woman as if you loved her, and yet not loving her all the while, I say that's not th' action of an honest man, and what isn't honest does come t' harm. I'm not a fool, and you're not a fool, and you know better than what you're saying. You know it couldn't be made public as you've behaved to Hetty as you've done, without her losing her character, and bringing shame and trouble on her and her relations. What if you meant nothing by your kissing and your presents? Other folks won't believe as you've meant nothing; and don't tell me about her not deceiving herself. I tell you as you've filled her mind so with the thought of you as it'll mayhap poison her life; and she'll never love another man as 'ud make her a good husband.

ARTHUR.

(In a tone of friendly concession.)

Well, Adam, you're perhaps right. Perhaps I've gone a little too far in taking notice of the pretty little thing, and stealing a kiss now and then. You're such a grave, steady fellow, you don't understand the temptation to such trifling. I'm sure I wouldn't bring trouble or annoyance on her and the good Poyzers on any account if I could help it. But I think you look a little too seriously at it. You know I'm going away immediately, so I shan't make any more mistakes of the kind. But let us say good-night (Arthur turns round to walk on) and talk no more about the matter. The whole thing will soon be forgotten.

ADAM.

(Throwing down his tools and striding around until he is in front of Arthur.)

No, by God, it'll not soon be forgot, as you've come in between her and me, when she might ha' loved me—it'll

not soon be forgot, as you've robbed me o' my happiness, while I thought you was my best friend, and a noble-minded man, as I was proud to work for. And you've been kissing her and meaning nothing, have you? And I never kissed her i' my life, but I'd ha' worked hard for years for the right to kiss her. And you make light of it. You think little o' doing what may damage other folks, so as you get your bit o' trifling, as means nothing. I throw back your favors, for you'r not the man I took you for. I'll never count you my friend any more. I'd rather you'd act as my enemy, and fight me where I stand—it's all th' amends you can make me.

(Arthur's expression changes as he learns for the first time that Adam loves Hetty. Adam throws off his cap and jacket, but Arthur stands motionless with his hands in his waistcoat pockets.)

ARTHUR.

Go away, Adam, I don't want to fight you.

ADAM.

No, you don't want to fight me; you think I'm a common man, as you can injure without answering for it. You know I won't strike you while you stand so.

ARTHUR.

(With warmth.)

I never meant to injure you. I didn't know you loved her.

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ADAM.

But you made her love you. You're a double-faced man —I'll never believe a word you say again.

ARTHUR.

(Angrily.)

Go away, I tell you, or we shall both repent.

ADAM.

(In a convulsed voice.)

No, I swear I won't go away without fighting you. Do you want provoking any more? I tell you you're a coward and a scoundrel, and I despise you.

(Arthur clinches his right hand and deals Adam a blow which sends him reeling backward. They exchange several blows. Finally Adam strikes Arthur. Arthur falls, his head lying

concealed in a tuft of fern. Adam waits for him to rise. There is no sign of life. Adam falls on his knees beside Arthur with a world of apprehension in his face. Adam loosens Arthur's cravat and collar. No sign of life.)

ADAM.

God.

(He lays a hand on Arthur's heart. Arthur stirs a little.)

ADAM.

(Tenderly)

Do you feel any pain, sir?

(Arthur turns his head and stares vaguely at Adam. He shivers and says nothing.)

ADAM.

Do you feel any hurt, sir?

(Arthur puts his hand to his waistcoat buttons, and when Adam has unbuttoned it, takes a long breath.)

ARTHUR.

(Faintly.)

Lay my head down and get me some water, if you can.

ADAM.

(Adam lays Arthur's head down on the fern again and, emptying the tools out of the basket, goes out, to return almost immediately with the basket dripping.)

(Kneeling to raise Arthur's head.)

Can you drink a drop out of your hand, sir?

ARTHUR.

No, dip my cravat in and souse it on my head.

(He raises himself a little higher and rests on Adam's arm.)

ADAM.

Do you feel any hurt inside, sir?

ARTHUR.

No—no hurt, but rather done up. I suppose I fainted when you knocked me down.

ADAM.

Yes, sir, thank God. I thought it was worse.

ARTHUR.

What, you thought you'd done for me, eh? Come help

me on my legs. (Adam helps him up.) I feel terribly shaky and dizzy. That blow of yours must have come against me like a battering ram. I don't believe I can walk alone.

ADAM.

Lean on me, sir; I'll get you along. Or will you sit down a bit longer on my coat here? I'll prop ye up. You'll perhaps be better in a minute or two.

ARTHUR.

(Sinking down on Adam's coat.)

I believe I will rest a little. I don't feel good for much.

ADAM.

(Sits also. After a little bit.)

My temper got the better of me, and I said things as wasn't true. I'd no right to speak as if you'd known you was doing me an injury. You'd no grounds for knowing it. I've always kept what I felt for her as secret as I could. And perhaps I judged you too harsh—you may have acted out o' thoughtlessness more than I should ha' believed was possible for a man with a heart and a conscience. We're not all put together alike, and we may misjudge one another. God knows, it's all the joy I could have now, to think the best of you.

ARTHUR.

Say no more about our anger, Adam. I forgive your momentary injustice—it was quite natural, with the exaggerated notions you had in your mind. We shall be none the worse friends in the future, I hope, because we've fought; you had the best of it, and that was as it should be, for I believe I've been most in the wrong of the two. Come, let us shake hands.

(Arthur holds out his hand, but Adam sits still.)

ADAM.

I don't like to say "No," to that, sir, but I can't shake hands till it's clear what we mean by't. I was wrong when I spoke as if you'd done me an injury knowingly, but I wasn't wrong in what I said before about your behavior t'Hetty, and I can't shake hands with you as if I held you my friend the same as ever till you've cleared that up better.

ARTHUR.

I don't know what you mean by clearing up, Adam. I've told you already that you think too seriously of a little flirtation. But if you are right in supposing there is any danger in it—I'm going away on Saturday, and there will be an end to it. As for the pain it has given you, I'm heartily sorry for it. I can say no more.

ADAM.

(Rising and looking down on Arthur.)

It'll be better for me to speak plain, though it's hard work. You see, sir, this isn't a trifle to me, whatever it may be to you. I'm none o' them men as can go making love to first one woman, and then t' another, and don't think it much odds which of them I take. What I feel for Hetty's a different sort o' love, such as I believe nobody can know much about but them as feel it, and God as has given it to them. She's more nor everything else to me, all but my conscience and my good name. If it's only trifling and flirting, as you call it, as'll be put an end to by your going away—why, then, I'd wait, and hope her heart 'ud turn to me after all. I'm loth to think you'd speak false to me, and I'll believe your word however things may look.

ARTHUR.

(Violently starting up from the ground.)

You would be wronging Hetty more than me not to believe it. (More feebly) but you seem to forget that, in suspecting me, you are casting imputations upon her.

ADAM.

(More calmly.)

Nay sir. Nay, sir. Things don't lie level between Hetty and you. You're acting with your eyes open, whatever you may do; but how do you know what's been in her mind? She's all but a child—as any man with a conscience in him ought to feel bound to take care on. And whatever you may think, I know you've disturbed her mind. I know she's been fixing her heart on you; for there's many things clear to me now as I didn't understand before. But you seem to make light o' what she may feel—you don't think o' that.

ARTHUR.

(Impetuously.)

Good God, Adam, let me alone! I feel it enough without you worrying me.

ADAM.

(Eagerly.)

Well, then, if you feel it, if you feel as you may ha' put false notions into her mind, and made her believe as you loved her, when all the while you mean nothing, I've this demand to make of you—I'm not speaking for myself, but for her. I ask you t' undeceive her before you go away. Y'arn't going away forever; and if you leave her behind with a notion in her head o' your feeling about her the same as she feels about you, she'll be hankering after you, and the mischief may get worse. It may be a smart to her now, but it'll save her pain i' the end. I ask you to write a letter—you may trust to my seeing as she gets it; tell her the truth, and take blame to yourself for behaving as you'd no right to do to a young woman as isn't your equal. I speak plain, sir. But I can't speak any other way. There's nobody can take care o' Hetty in this thing but me.

ARTHUR.

I can do what I think needful in the matter without giving promises to you. I shall take what measures I think proper.

ADAM.

(Abruptly.)

No, that won't do. I must know what ground I'm treading on. I must be safe as you've put an end to what ought never to ha' been begun. I don't forget what's owing to you as a gentleman; but in this thing we're man and man, and I can't give up.

ARTHUR.

I'll see you tomorrow. I can bear no more now, I'm ill.
(He rises.)

ADAM.

(Barring his way.)

You won't see her again? Either tell me now she can never be my wife—tell me you've been lying—or else promise me what I've said, not tomorrow, but now.

ARTHUR.

I promise--let me go. I'll write it now—in the Hermitage.

ADAM.

I'll wait for it, sir. You're not well enough to walk alone. Take my arm. (assisting him to the Hermitage.)

ARTHUR.

(Turning at the door of the Hermitage.)

Remember this letter is all your work, Adam. I leave it to you to decide whether you will be doing best to deliver it to Hetty or to return it to me. Ask yourself once more whether you are not taking a measure which may pain her more than mere silence. We shall meet with better feelings some months hence.

ADAM.

Perhaps you're right about that, sir. It's no use meeting to say more hard words, and it's no use meeting to shake hands and say we're friends again. We're not friends and it's better not to pretend it. I know forgiveness is a man's duty, but to my thinking, that can only mean as you're to give up all thoughts of taking revenge; it can never mean as you're t' have your old feelings back again, such as we've had since we were little fellows, for that's not possible. You're not the same man to me, and I can't feel the same toward you. God help me! I don't know whether I feel the same toward anybody; I seem as if I'd been measuring my work from a false line, and had got it all to measure over again.

(Arthur closes the door of the Hermitage after him and an instant later passes the window with a lighted candle. Adam gives a sob—passes his hand over his eyes—and is gathering the scattered tools as

The Curtain Falls.

ACT IV.

PLACE—The parlor of the Green Man—a small inn in Windsor. Time, February, 1800. A pleasant-looking woman of fifty in apron and cap is in the room as the curtain rises. Immediately the door opens to admit a fat and jolly-looking landlord who supports Hetty, pale and thinner and with dark circles under her eyes. She comes into the room very wearily. Hetty throughout the act wears a full red cape, which falls to her knees, a brown stuff skirt and a small round bonnet of some sober color. On her arm she has a basket. She is footsore and weary, having left Mappleton and the Hall Farm some days before. She has walked and ridden hundreds of miles to reach Arthur at Windsor.)

THE INNKEEPER (Cordially.)

Come in, young woman, come in and have a drop o' something. You're pretty near beat out. I can see that. (to his wife) Here, missis, get this young woman summat to eat. She's a little overcome.

THE LANDLADY.

(Setting out meat and bread and beer on one of the small tables, while Hetty eyes her hungrily, and glancing at Hetty's ringless hand.)

Draw up your chair and have something. (Significantly.) Why, you're not very fit for traveling. Have you come far?

HETTY (Eating ravenously.)

Yes, I've come a good long way, and it's very tiring, but I'm better now. Could you tell me which way to go to this place?

(Taking from her pocket a letter folded over to show an address at the end.)

THE LANDLORD.

(Coming up and looking at the paper.)

Why, what do you want at that house?

HETTY.

I want to see a gentleman as is there.

THE LANDLORD.

But there's no gentleman there. It's shut up—been shut up for a fortnight. What gentleman is it you want? Perhaps I can let you know where to find him?

HETTY (Tremulously.)

It's Captain Donnithorne.

THE LANDLORD.

Captain Donnithorne! Stop a bit. Was he in the Stafforōshire militia? A tall young officer with a fairish skin and smooth-shaven, and had a servant by the name o' Pym?

HETTY.

Yes; yes. You know him. Where is he?

LANDLORD.

A fine sight o' miles from here; the Staffordshire militia's gone to Ireland. It's been gone this fortnight.

LANDLADY.

Look there! She's fainting.

(The landlord supports Hetty and with his wife carries her to a sofa, where the woman removes her bonnet.)

THE LANDLORD.

(Bringing some water.)

Here's a bad business, I suspect.

THE LANDLADY.

Ah! it's plain enough what sort of business it is. She's not a common flaunting dratchell, I can see that. She looks like a respectable country girl, and she comes from a good way off, to judge by her tongue. She talks something like that hostler we had that come from the north; he was as honest a fellow as we ever had about the house; they're all honest folks in the north.

THE LANDLORD.

I never saw a prettier young woman in my life. She's like a picture in a shop-winder. It goes to one's heart to look at her.

THE LANDLADY.

It 'ud have been a good deal better for her if she'd been uglier and had more conduct. But she's coming to again. Fetch a drop more water.
(Hetty shows signs of life and the landlord goes out.)

LANDLADY.

Poor child, poor child (rubbing Hetty's forehead) I'd a darter of me own once.

HETTY (Starting up.)

Oh, I thought you were my aunt Poyser and were going to scold me.

LANDLADY.

There, there, child. Nobody's going to scold you. We'll send you home in a day or —.

HETTY (Quickly.)

No, no, I don't want to go home. Why they'd turn me from the house. I can't go home now.

LANDLADY.

Oh, they'd never be that cruel, and you so young and pretty. Haven't ye a mother, child?

HETTY.

No, no mother. She died when I was a little 'un and my father, too, an' you don't know what a sharp tongue my aunt's got. No, no, I doubt not they'd turn me out on the parish, and I'd be like that woman what was found against the church wall one Sunday last winter. She was near dead wi' cold and hunger and they took her and the baby to the PARISH. (Hetty pronounces this last word as though it were the very depth of humiliation and disgrace.) But she died after. Oh, no, I'll never go back. I'd sooner drown myself.

LANDLADY.

Talk not of drowning—so young as you. This trouble

will pass, my dear. Come, hadn't you better tell me all about it? Perhaps I can help you or anyway counsel you a bit. I'm an old woman, child.

HETTY.

(Weeping.)

I'm sure you're very kind. No one else has spoken so kindly to me since I left home Friday was a fortnight. Oh, what a big world it is and how hard to find one's way about in it. And now to think he's gone.

LANDLADY.

Poor child, poor child. I doubt not you've had strange adventuring of late—so pretty and young as you are. I used to live on a farm when I was a girl, too. There's nothing like it.

HETTY.

The coaches were too dear. I had to give them up after the first day, but one man was kind to me and wrote me down the places that came before Windsor. I walked most o' the way with sometimes a carrier's cart, and one day I went wrong and walked for a whole day to the wrong place. The village where I come from is more nor a hundred miles from here.

THE LANDLADY.

And did no one give you a lift on the road?

HETTY.

Oh yes, sometimes, but I'm not used to long walks, and the mile-stones were so far apart. I walked five miles from Stoniton and then it began to rain. I tried to get on to another village, but I had had no breakfast and I had that gone feeling and couldn't walk fast. There came a rumbling of wheels behind me and then a covered wagon, with the driver cracking his whip alongside. The man had such a gruff voice. I had never asked for charity before. I couldn't have this time, but on the front seat I saw a little white spaniel and then I knew that the man was kind. I asked him would he take me up and he let me lie inside on the wool packs out of the rain and in that way I came to Ashby.

LANDLADY.

Ashby, Ashby, I don't remember that name. It must be a long ways from here.

HETTY.

Oh it is—a long, long way. From Ashby I started walking again for I was anxious to get out o' the towns—the men stared so. I walked until I was so overcome I had to sit down by the wayside. There was a return chaise came along, and the postilion asked me if I wouldn't ride, but he was drunk and twisted himself around in the saddle, and shouted questions at me, and galloped the horses all the way until I was near frightened to death. And oh how different that country is from ours—all flat fields and hedge rows and dotted houses. Do you know how sweet it is in Staffordshire where the Gueldres roses bloom in at the windows?

THE LANDLADY.

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Yes, yes. I was there when I was first married. But didn't you have any money?

HETTY.

Yes, a little, but the coaches cost so and eating at the public comes high and when I found out it was so much further to Windsor nor I thought I counted the shillings that were left and I found that by eating three buns a day and walking all the way I could just get here before my last six-pence was gone.

LANDLADY.

It's a wonder you had the courage.

HETTY.

Oh, I tried to drown myself. Sometimes I left the highroad that I might walk slowly and not care how my face looked. One day I came to a dark pool that the rains had filled up until the elder bushes were underneath the water. I thought that by the time the pool got shallow in summer they couldn't find out that IT was my body nor why I drowned myself—(breaks into a fit of sobbing.)

LANDLADY (Trying to quiet her.)

There, there, it's wicked to drown oneself.

HETTY (Fiercely.)

I don't care. It was dark and there was no hurry. I had all night to do it in. I got some stones and put them in my basket so that it mightn't float, and then I ate some buns that I had bought in the morning, and then I must have fallen asleep. When I woke up it was deep night and cold, so cold. I got up to walk about to warm myself, because I'd be better able to do it then, for I couldn't drown myself while I was so cold.

.. **LANDLADY.**

Sleeping in the fields o' night. Oh, what a shame.

HETTY.

And I'd never cared much for my home when I was well and happy, but I thought of it that night, the bright fire, and the polished pewter and them all sitting down to supper. And the good man who loved me; the fields and the dairy and the dogs and the children—and oh, I loved them all. And I stretched out my arms to 'em, but something deep and black was between and I knew that I should never go back or see 'em again. And then I thought of HIM and I cursed him there in the dark.

LANDLADY.

But you didn't go into the pool.

HETTY.

No, I durst not. It was as though I was dead and knew it and longed to get back into life again. I was sorry and glad at the same time—sorry that I dast not face death; glad that I was still in life, and as I walked in the field, I brushed against the dear warm body of a sheep and I knew that I might yet know light and warmth again, for I remembered when I felt the sheep that I had seen a hovel in the next field, such as Allick used at home in lambing time, and I thought that if I could get to it I would be warmer. I took the stones from my basket and climbed the stile.

.. THE LANDLADY.

You never slept in one o' them dirty hovels?

HETTY.

Yes and was glad to. I felt my way along the rails and something pricked my hand sharply—it was the prickling of the gorsy wall of the hovel. Oh the joy of it, the shelter, the roof, the warm, close smell! There was straw on the floor of the hovel and I knelt there and I kissed my arms, I was so glad to be alive.

THE LANDLADY.

Dear heart, dear heart.

HETTY.

And I had dreams—one after another—and the dreams slid into one another until I thought that I was in the hovel and my aunt standing over me with a candle in her hand. But there was no candle, only the light of the early morning through the open door and there was a face looking down at me—a man in a smock-frock. And he was very rough to me and said terrible things to me and frightened me. I told him I was traveling south'ard and that I'd lost my way an' he laughed at me and said anybody would think I was a wild woman to look at me. And the day was as hard as the night.

LANDLADY.

But surely there is someone you could go to? The young man you spoke of—not Captain Donnithorne—but the young man as loved you. Couldn't you go to him?

HETTY.

Adam? Oh, you don't know Adam. He loved me, but he's as proud as proud. He'd never ha' asked me to marry him if he'd known the truth. And if I'd ha' known it then, I'd never ha' promised, either. But I kept thinking that something must happen to save me—I couldn't stand to be disgraced in my own village where we've allays held our heads so high. And then Aunt said folks couldn't be married like cuckoos

and we must wait till March and I couldn't wait till March. I couldn't ha' borne to hear what my aunt would a-said, and Adam too, if they'd a-known.

THE LANDLADY.

But Captain Donnithorne, couldn't he help you?

HETTY.

Oh he was away all the time—here in Windsor—and before he went he wrote me a letter and told me that he couldn't marry me. Adam knew that there'd been something between us, for he brought me the letter—the one that I showed to your man. But Adam never guessed the truth. And then I thought when I couldn't wait till March and couldn't marry Adam that I'd come to the Captain at Windsor and ask him to hide me somewhere, for though I knew from his letter that he wouldn't mind about me as he used to, he promised to be good to me.

THE LANDLADY.

That's the way wi' them fine gentlemen. Much they care what the poor girl suffers, and he gone off to Ireland.

HETTY (Crying again.)

Oh, he didn't mean to be cruel and though I cursed him that night by the pool, he couldn't know what's happened to me. Only I thought all the time that he'd marry me and make a lady of me until I got his letter—that cruel, cruel letter. He told me that I should never be happy except I married a man in my own station, and that if he married me he'd only be adding to the wrong he had done, as well as offending against his duty to his relations. He said we mustn't feel like lovers any more, and that I must think of him as little as I could and then he said as how he'd always be my affectionate friend.

LANDLADY.

Affectionate friend, indeed.

HETTY.

But of course he never thought and I'm sure I never did cf—what happened. And I just didn't dare stay at

home any longer and face Adam and my aunt and them all, and have the finger of shame pointed at me. Oh, dear, I was like a fox in a trap. All day as I'd go about the house, this weight sat upon me and at night I'd wake up and try to push it off and every day it grew worse, and I came to be afraid that my aunt would find out. And then I said that I'd go to visit a niece of my aunt's—she's a Methodist preacher in Derbyshire—but I never stopped at the town where she lives but came straight here, trusting that Captain Donnithorne would be good to me.

LANDLADY.

He cared nothing about you as a man ought to care. He trifled with you and made a plaything of you.

HETTY.

Yes he DID care for me at first. But it began by little an' little till at last I couldn't throw it off. And I did believe he'd make me the right amends.

LANDLADY.

If he'd cared for you rightly he'd never have behaved so.

HETTY.

He meant nothing by his kissing and presents, but I trusted to his loving me well enough to marry me, for all he's a gentleman. I was so young. I had no mother. I hadn't seen much o' what goes on in the world. But it's a terrible thing to have folks speak light o' you and lose your character.

LANDLADY.

Well, well, there's probably a great hue and cry over you at home by this time. When was you expected back?

HETTY.

In a week and it's already gone a fortnight, but I'll never go back, never, never. The pool or the parish is better nor that. And if anyone should come inquiring of me, which isn't likely, you'll say you haven't seen me, won't you, won't you? (She is weeping bitterly again now.) Say you will.

THE LANDLADY.

(Smoothing Hetty's hair as she lies on the lounge.)

We won't tell on you. There, there, don't cry. We must find a way. You shall stay at the Green Man until you're rested a bit and then we'll try if we can't find you a situation, though it'll be hard, I doubt not. Cry it out if you want to. You'll feel the better for it. I'll talk it over with my man, but I doubt not he'll be persuaded to let you stay for a while at least. We need a barmaid. I'll likely persuade him. We had a darter of our own once.

(The landlord comes in now.)

THE LANDLADY (To her husband.)

The poor girl's that beat. I'm going to take her upstairs. She must rest a bit—it's a bed she needs, and when she's rested we can find something for her to do about the Green Man.

THE LANDLORD.

I'd have you to know that the Green Man's a respectable public inn and the name o' Stone has always been an honor'ble one. I'll not have it disgraced now, nor have base-born brats in my house either.

THE LANDLADY.

Lor', I never thought you'd be that hard. 'Twas you yourself brought her in. And whose money, I want to know, helped you to buy the Green Man.

THE LANDLORD (Ignoring the last remark.)

I could see she was beat out, but you've given her to eat and drink and that's enough. Now let her get on. This thing's likely to breed trouble, harboring runaway farm gells, and I want no trouble in my house.

THE LANDLADY.

But you wor sayin' only the other day as you wished we had a young and pretty barmaid and I'm sure she's young and pretty enough and in a little while she can tend the bar for ye.'

THE LANDLORD.

But I'll have none but respectable gells in this house. This thing's like to bring trouble—gells as have doin's with fine gentlemen—and beside who's to pay for the doctorin' before that? That's what I want to know.

HETTY.

I've no money but I've a locket and earrings that might bring something—enough to pay for a day or two and then I'll go on if you please (falteringly.)

(She takes the things from a red case in her pocket and lays them on the table before him.)

THE LANDLORD.

We might take 'em to the jeweler's shop, for there's one not far off; but Lord bless you, they wouldn't give you a quarter o' what the things are worth. And you wouldn't like to part with 'em?

HETTY (Indifferently.)

Oh I don't mind. I'd ruther have the money.

THE LANDLORD.

And they might think the things were stolen, as you wanted to sell 'em, for it isn't usual for a young woman like you to have fine jew'lery like that.

HETTY (Drawing herself up.)

I belong to respectable folk. I'm not a thief.

THE LANDLADY (Indignantly.)

No, that you aren't. I'll be bound, and you've no call to say that. The things were gev to her; that's plain enough to be seen.

THE LANDLORD (Apologetically.)

I didn't mean as I thought so, but I said it was what the jeweler might think, and so he wouldn't be offering much money for 'em.

THE LANDLADY.

Well, suppose you were to advance some money on the things yourself, and then if she liked to redeem 'em arter, she could.

THE LANDLORD.

Well, have it your own way, Sarah.

(The landlady puts her arm around Hetty and they leave the room. As they reach the door the landlady turns and says to her husband.)

THE LANDLADY.

And if anyone should come inquire you haven't seen any girl from the north.

THE LANDLORD.

Well, all right. Nobody ever said as John Stone couldn't keep a secret.

(He takes out the locket and trinkets and examines them by the window. The door opens and Adam Bede comes in. He has a stick and a bundle and appears to have walked a long way. He looks worn and dusty and very anxious.)

ADAM.

Ye haven't seen any young woman here as was travelin' sou'ward?

THE LANDLORD.

What sort of a young woman?

ADAM.

Very young and pretty, eighteen years old, with grey eyes and curly hair and a red cloak on and a basket on her arm. You couldn't forget her if you saw her.

THE LANDLORD.

Nay, I'n seen no young woman.

ADAM.

Think, are you quite sure? Her name is Hetty—Hetty Sorrel.

THE LANDLORD.

How long ago might it be?

ADAM.

She left Mappleton Friday was a fortnight and was goin' to visit a young woman in Stoniton. But she never went there, and I can't trace her further nor Ashby.

THE LANDLORD.

Mayhap she's run away, but I'n seen no young woman. Won't you have a pint o' ale? You seem tired-like.

ADAM.

No, I'll push on. The highway forks a few miles back and I maun take the other road. Happen she went in that direction.

THE LANDLADY (Entering quickly.)

The poor child is that—(stops suddenly on seeing Adam)

ADAM.

Goodbye. (goes out.)

THE LANDLORD.

(Bowing by the door.)

I'm sorry I'm not able to serve you.

THE LANDLADY.

Why, who was that? Another stranger from the north?

LANDLORD.

Yes, he was inquiren' for a young girl in a red cloak as had run away from the north. He said her name was Hetty—Hetty Sorrel.

THE LANDLADY (Running to the window.)

Well, she couldn't go home now, that's for certain, and she told us not to tell. It's better so, perhaps, it's better so.

THE LANDLORD.

Well, I gi' ye my word I wouldn't tell, but I doubt not trouble'll come o' it. I don't like this deceivin'.

THE LANDLADY.

(Coaxingly, laying a hand on his arm.)

But you couldn't be hard on the poor thing. Do you know how old our Mary would ha' been an' she'd lived?

(The landlord rubs the back of his hand over his eyes, and the landlady goes to a chest that stands at one side of the room and begins to take out a baby's shirts and little dresses, laying them on the floor in a little white pile as

The Curtain Falls.

ACT V.

Scene 1.

(SCENE, a Courtroom. Time, February, 1800. At the back of the room a line of high pointed windows, variegated with the mellow tints of old stained glass. At one side is an oak gallery with dusty armor decorating its front. At the other side is a gallery with a curtain of old tapestry, covered with dim, indistinct figures. On the bench sits a grim judge in a black gown and white powdered wig. In front of him and below him is a table at which sit the clerk of the court, the prosecutor and a barrister who acts as Hetty's attorney, all in wigs and gowns. On one side is the jury of twelve men and at the other the prisoner's dock in which Hetty stands, very pale, dressed in black with white collar and cuffs, with her hands clasped before her. The court room is filled with people, among whom sits Mr. Irwine next to Martin Poyser, the jail chaplain, Bartle Massey and Adam Bede. Adam sits as near the prisoner's dock as he can get, with his head part of the time bowed forward on the rail. The rest of the spectators are unknown to the audience, except that some of the tenants who appeared at the Hall in the second act might naturally be seen among them. There are also ladies in the court room, fashionably and elaborately dressed after the fashion of the time, with big feathered bonnets and lorgnettes which they put up to stare at the prisoner and then to whisper. The ladies are seated in the galleries. When the curtain goes up, there is a witness in the witness chair—an elderly man in rusty black. He is in the act of being sworn as the curtain rises, and the clerk mumbles the oath at him, much as is done in a modern court of law. The words cannot be understood by the audience except the "s—elp—y—God" at the end. Instead of raising his hand as the oath is administered the witness kisses the book.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

What is your name, sir?

THE WITNESS.

Mark Buford, M. D.

THE PROSECUTOR.

You know this defendant?

THE WITNESS.

I have seen her before.

THE PROSECUTOR.

Where?

THE WITNESS.

At the Green Man, an inn in Windsor, where I was called two weeks ago to treat her.

THE PROSECUTOR.

State the nature of the treatment, doctor.

THE WITNESS.

I delivered her of a child.

THE PROSECUTOR.

Was the child born alive?

THE WITNESS.

It was, sir.

THE PROSECUTOR.

When did you last see that child, doctor?

THE WITNESS.

The child was born on February 16, and the day after when I called, the landlady of the inn informed me that the mother and child had left the place and she did not know where they had gone.

THE PROSECUTOR.

In your judgment, was the mother insane?

THE WITNESS.

Not at all, sir. She asked perfectly rational questions concerning the child and seemed a fine, buxom young country woman.

THE PROSECUTOR.

That will do, doctor.

(As the doctor steps down from the chair Hetty stares at him.)

HETTY.

(As though speaking to herself.)

I never had no child. I never had no child.

THE BAILIFF (Tapping with a staff.)

Order in court; order in court.

THE CLERK (Sonorously.)

Martin Poyser.

(Martin Poyser, still rotund, but not nearly so rosy, takes the chair. He is sworn as the doctor was.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

Your name.

MR. POYSER.

Martin Poyser. (Hetty starts visibly as though she had not seen him before.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

Where do you reside?

MR. POYSER.

In the parish of Mappleton, county of Staffordshire.

THE PROSECUTOR.

Have you ever seen the defendant before?

MR. POYSER.

Yes, sir, she is my sister's child.

THE PROSECUTOR.

When did you last see the defendant?

MR. POYSER.

Five weeks ago come Friday, sir.

THE PROSECUTOR.

Where did she reside?

POYSER.

At my house, up to that time, sir.

THE PROSECUTOR.

Did she have a child when you last saw her?

POYSER.

She did not and I'm sure——

THE PROSECUTOR.

That will do. Answer the question, please. Do you know of any reason why the witness should murder her child?

POYSER.

I do not, sir.

THE PROSECUTOR.

That will do.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

I should like to ask this witness a question.

THE JUDGE.

Proceed.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

Was the defendant's reputation good in her parish?

POYSER.

None better. She was allays a good gell and her aunt—

THE PROSECUTOR.

I object to this line of questioning at this time.

THE JUDGE.

No further questions will be allowed. (To Poyser)
That is all.

(Mr. Poyser leaves the courtroom. Mr. Irwine joins him and puts his arm around his shoulder encouragingly.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

Call Sarah Stone.

(The bailiff goes out and his voice is heard outside bellowing)

Sarah Stone, Sarah Stone, Sarah Stone, come into court.

(The landlady of the Green Man enters the room. She is respectably clad in bonnet and shawl, and looks very unhappy. She is sworn like the others and takes her seat in the witness chair.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

Tell us your name.

THE LANDLADY.

My name is Sarah Stone.

THE PROSECUTOR.

What is your occupation or your husband's occupation?

THE LANDLADY.

My husband and I keep the Green Man, a licensed inn in Windsor.

THE PROSECUTOR.

Tell us how you came to know the prisoner at the bar.

THE LANDLADY.

The prisoner is the same young woman who came looking ill and tired, with a basket on her arm and asked for lodgings at the Green Man. That was February 14. My husband asked her to come in and eat, she looked that tired. The prisoner began to cry and against my husband's advice I asked her to stay at least for the night. Her prettiness, and something respectable about her clothes and looks, and the trouble she seemed to be in, made me as I couldn't find it in my heart to send her away at once. She'd hardly any money left in her pocket, but I saw no reason why I shouldn't take her in. I thought she'd been led wrong and got into trouble, and it would be a good work to keep her out of farther harm.

THE PROSECUTOR (Holding out some baby clothes.)

Have you seen these clothes before?

THE LANDLADY.

Yes sir. I made them myself, and had kept them by me ever since my last child was born. I took a deal of trouble both for the child and the mother. I couldn't help taking to the little thing and being anxious about it. The second night after she came the child was born, and the next day the mother would have no nay but would get up and be dressed, in spite of everything I could say. She said she felt quite

strong enough, and it was wonderful what spirit she showed. But I wasn't quite easy what I should do about her, and towards evening I made up my mind I'd go and speak to the doctor about it. I left the house about half-past eight o'clock.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

Your honor, I object.

THE JUDGE.

Objection overruled. Go on.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

We except.

MRS. STONE.

I left the prisoner sitting up by the fire in the kitchen with the baby on her lap. She hadn't cried or seemed low at all, as she did the night before. I thought she had a strange look with her eyes, and she got a bit flushed toward evening. I was afraid of the fever. I was longer than I meant to be, and it was an hour and a half before I got back, and when I went in, the candle was burning just as I left it, but the prisoner and the baby were both gone. She'd taken her cloak and bonnet, but she'd left her basket and things in it. I was dreadful frightened, and angry with her for going. I didn't go to give information because I'd no thought she meant to do any harm, and I knew she had enough money in her pocket to buy food and lodging. I didn't like to set the constable after her, for she'd a right to go from me if she liked.

THE PROSECUTOR.

That will do, Mistress Stone.

(Hetty's face is a study during the giving of this witness' testimony. The landlady leaves the stand, looking pittingly toward Hetty.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

Call John Olding.

The bailiff (as before outside the courtroom)

John Olding, John Olding, John Olding, come into court.

(A man in a smock frock enters and takes the witness stand. He is sworn as the others were.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

Your name?

THE WITNESS.

John Olding, sir.

THE PROSECUTOR.

What do you work at?

THE WITNESS.

I'm a laborer, sir.

THE PROSECUTOR.

Where do you live?

THE WITNESS.

At Tedd's Hole, two miles out o' Windsor.

THE PROSECUTOR.

Tell us when you first saw this prisoner.

THE WITNESS.

A week last Monday, toward one o'clock in the afternoon, I was going toward Hetton Coppice, and about a quarter of a mile from the coppice I saw the prisoner, in a red cloak, sitting under a bit of a haystack not far off the stile. She got up when she saw me, and seemed as if she'd be walking on the other way. It was a regular road through the fields, and nothing very uncommon to see a young woman there, but I took notice of her because she looked white and scared. I should have thought she was a beggar woman only for her good clothes. I thought she looked a bit crazy, but it was no business of mine. I stood and looked back arter her, but she went right on while she was in sight. I had to go t' other side of the coppice to look after some stakes. I hadn't gone far afore I heard a strange cry. I thought it didn't come from any animal I knew, but I wasn't for stopping to look about just then. But it went on, and seemed so strange to me in that place, I couldn't help stopping to look. But I'd hard work to tell which way it came from, and for a

good while I kept looking up at the boughs. And then I thought it came from the ground; and there was a lot o' timber-choppings lying about, and loose pieces o' turf, and a trunk or two. And I looked about among them, but at last the cry stopped. So I was for giving it up, and went on about my business. But when I come back the same way pretty nigh an hour arter, I couldn't help a-lying down my stakes to have another look. And just as I was stoopin' and a-layin' down o' the stakes, I saw somthing odd and round and whitish lying on the ground under a nut-bush by the side of me. And I stooped down on hands and knees to pick it up. And I saw it war a little baby's hand.

(At these words an audible thrill runs through the court. Hetty trembles visibly.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

Go on.

THE WITNESS.

There were a lot o' timber-choppings put together just where the ground went hollow-like, under the bush, and the hand come out from among 'em. But there were a hole left in one place, and I could see down it, and see the child's head; and I made haste and did away the turf and the choppings, and took out the child. It had got comfortable clothes on, but its body was cold, and I thought it must be dead. I made haste back with it out o' the wood, and took it home to my wife. She said it war dead, and I'd better take it to the parish and tell the constable. And I said, 'I'll lay my life it's that young woman's child, as I met going to the coppice.' But she seemed to be gone clean out of sight. And I took the child on to Hetton parish and told the constable, and we went on to Justice Hardy. And then we went lookin' arter the young woman till dark at night, and we went and gave information at Stoniton as they might stop her. And the next morn-ing another constable come to me, to go with him to the spot where I found the child. And when we got there, there was the prisoner a-sitting against the bush

where I found the child; and she cried out when she saw us, but she never offered to move. She'd got a big piece o' bread on her lap.

(As the witness finishes Adam gives a despairing groan and drops his head on the railing in front of him. The witness leaves the court room.)

THE PROSECUTOR.

That is the case for the Crown.

THE CLERK.

Call the Reverend Mr. Irwine.

THE BAILIFF.

Rector Irwine, Rector Irwine, Rector Irwine, come into court.

(Mr. Irwine takes his place in the witness' chair.)

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

Your name, sir?

MR. IRWINE.

Dauphin Irwine.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

You are a church incumbent?

MR. IRWINE.

Yes—of the parishes of Donnithorne and Mappleton.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

You know the prisoner at the bar?

MR. IRWINE.

Yes. She is one of my parishioners—a member of one of the most excellent families in the parish.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

Had the prisoner to your knowledge ever committed any crime?

MR. IRWINE.

Never, so far as I know. She is a very young girl, only eighteen, of highly respectable antecedents and connections—a regular attendant at church, quiet and domestic.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

Did you know that she had left home?

MR. IRWINE.

Yes, over a fortnight ago. One of my parishioners came to me and told me that Hetty had gone to visit a relative in another parish, but had never reached there and it was feared that something had befallen her. Search was made.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

Do you know any reason why she should kill her child, supposing that she did kill it?

MR. IRWINE.

None at all. I believe that her friends would have cared for her in her trouble.

HETTY'S COUNSEL.

That will do, sir.

(Mr. Irwine takes a place beside Adam.)

THE JUDGE.

Gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the evidence in this case. You have heard the testimony of the doctor who delivered the prisoner of her child; you have heard the evidence of the woman who sheltered her and from whom she ran away; you have heard the testimony of the laborer who found the dead child in the field after seeing the mother leave the place hurriedly. The child was dressed in clothes which have been identified by the witness Stone. You have heard the testimony of the uncle of the prisoner who gave her a home and of the rector of her parish who believes that her friends would have forgiven her had she confessed her fault to them. You have seen the obstinate bearing of the prisoner and you have heard her deny, in the face of the evidence, that she ever had a child. It is now your duty to decide the question of fact—did the prisoner at the bar bury her new-born child, with the intention of abandoning it to its fate? The fact that it was alive when its cries were heard by Olding has

nothing to do with the case—the intent to kill is the same. You will now retire and consider your verdict. If you believe the witnesses that you have heard testify you must bring in a verdict of guilty.

(The jury files out of the box and off the stage. The judge goes in the opposite direction and is followed by Hetty between her jailers. The court room breaks into a low hum of conversation.)

ADAM.

Is he come back?

MR. IRWINE.

No, he is not.

ADAM (looking hard at Mr. Irwine, in a tone of angry suspicion.)

You needn't deceive me, sir, I only want justice. I want him to feel what she feels. It's his work. . . . she was a child as it 'ud ha' gone t'anybody's heart to look at. . . . I don't care what she's done. . . . It was him brought her to it. And he shall know it. . . . he shall feel it. . . . if there's a just God, he shall feel what it is t' ha' brought a child like her to sin and misery. . . .

MR. IRWINE.

I'm not deceiving you, Adam, Arthur Donnithorne is not come back—was not come back when I left. I have left a letter for him; he will know all as soon as he arrives.

ADAM (Indignantly.)

But you don't mind about it. You think it doesn't matter as she stands here in shame and misery, and he knows nothing about it—he suffers nothing.

MR. IRWINE.

Adam, he WILL know—he WILL suffer, long and bitterly. He has a heart and a conscience; I can't be entirely deceived in his character. He may be weak, but he is not callous, not coldly selfish. I am persuaded that this will be a shock of which he will feel the effects all his life. Why do you crave vengeance in this

way? No amount of torture that you could inflict on HIM could benefit HER.

ADAM (Groaning aloud.)

No—Oh God, no, but this is the deepest curse of all. . . that's what makes the blackness of it. . . IT CAN NEVER BE UNDONE. My poor Hetty. . . she can never be my sweet Hetty again. . . the prettiest thing that God had made—smiling up at me. . . I thought she loved me. . . and was good. . . But she isn't as guilty as they say? You don't think she *is*, sir? She can't ha' done it.

MR. IRWINE (Gently.)

That perhaps can never be known with certainty, Adam. But suppose the worst; you have no right to say that the guilt of her crime lies with him, and that he ought to bear the punishment. It is not for us men to apportion the shares of moral guilt and retribution. We find it impossible to avoid mistakes even in determining who has committed a single criminal act, and the problem how far a man is to be held responsible for the unforeseen consequences of his own deed, is one that might well make us tremble to look into it. Don't suppose I can't enter into the anguish that drives you into this state of revengeful hatred; but think of this: if you were to obey your passion—for it *IS* passion, and you deceive yourself in calling it justice—it might be with you precisely as it has been with Arthur; nay, worse; your passion might lead you yourself into a horrible crime.

ADAM (Bitterly.)

No— not worse. I don't believe it's worse. I'd sooner do a wickedness as I could suffer for myself, than ha' brought HER to do wickedness and then stand by and see 'em punish her while they let me alone; and all for a bit o' pleasure. as, if he'd had a man's heart in him, he'd ha' cut his hand off sooner than he'd ha' taken it. What if he didn't foresee what's happened? He foresaw enough; he'd no right t' expect anything

but harm and shame to her. And then he wanted to smooth it over wi' lies. No—there's plenty o' things folks are hanged for not half so hateful as that; let a man do what he will, if he knows he's to bear the punishment himself, he isn't half so bad as a mean selfish coward as makes things easy t' himself, and knows all the while the punishment 'ull fall on somebody else.

(The knock of the jury is heard. The clerk hastens away to summon the judge. The court room, which has been in disorder, sinks into the deepest silence as the judge comes back through the door by which he left, with Hetty and her jailers following. She stands again in the prisoner's dock. The bailiff raps for order and shouts "Order in court," as the door opens and the jury files in. Everyone except Hetty leans forward, scrutinizing the faces. She alone seems turned to stone.)

THE CLERK (calling off the names of the jurors.)

Luke Bannister, Silas Marnier, Seth Britton, John Casson, James Taft, Michael Holdsworth. Willum Craig, Joshua Rahn, Willum Downes, Benjamin Gawnaine, John Satchell, Job Knowles, have you agreed upon a verdict?

FOREMAN OF THE JURY.

We have.

THE CLERK (To Hetty.)

Hold up your hand. (She holds it up.)

(To the jury). What is your verdict?

FOREMAN OF THE JURY.

Guilty.

(In the midst of intense silence the judge puts on his black cap and the jail chaplain in canonicals appears behind him.)

THE JUDGE.

Hester Sorrel, what have you to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?

HETTY.

I never had any child. I never had any child.

THE JUDGE (Frowning.)

Hester Sorrel, you have been found guilty by a jury of your peers of a murder most foul and barbarous—to-wit, child murder—for which the laws of your country have affixed the punishment of death. The result of your trial pronounces you a guilty person and it now awaits you to hear the sentence under which you are to receive your country's justice. That sentence is that you, Hester Sorrel, be taken from the bar of the court where you now stand to the place whence you came, the jail, and thence you are to be conveyed on Monday next to the common place of execution and there you are to be hanged by the neck until you are dead and the Lord have mercy on your soul'

(As the judge pronounces the words "until you are dead," Hetty gives a piercing shriek, Adam jumps to his feet and stretches his arms toward her, but cannot reach her, and she falls fainting inside the prisoner's dock, not a soul stretching a hand to save her, as the judge pronounces the final phrases.

The Curtain Falls.

Scene 2.

(The stage is entirely dark as the curtain rises on Hetty's cell. Dinah enters through a door at the back, opened for her by a turnkey with a key which grates in the lock. He has a lantern. He steps into the cell and his lantern searches out the gloom of the room, revealing Hetty with her head on her knees seated on a truckle-bed of straw. She is very pale and dressed in black, without a cap, her hair disordered and with only a white neckerchief at her throat. Dinah wears black with a white collar and cuffs and her plain white cap. She looks like a sister of mercy. She also is very pale. Dinah waits till the door closes behind the turnkey with a clang. He leaves his lantern behind him. A ray of light falls on Hetty.)

DINAH (Softly.)

Hetty.

(No answer or movement from Hetty.)

DINAH.

Hetty—it's Dinah.

(Hetty makes a little motion.)

DINAH.

Hetty—Dinah is come to you.

(Hetty lifts her head slowly from her knees. Dinah stretches out her arms to her.)

DINAH.

Don't you know me, Hetty? Don't you remember Dinah? Did you think I wouldn't come to you in trouble?

(Hetty fixes her eyes on Dinah's face.)

DINAH.

I'm come to be with you, Hetty—not to leave you—to stay with you—to be your sister to the last.

(Hetty rises, takes a step forward and is clasped in Dinah's arms. After a pause they sit down side by side on the bed.)

DINAH (Very gently.)

Hetty, do you know who it is that sits by your side?

HETTY (Slowly.)

Yes—it's Dinah.

DINAH.

Oh, if I'd only known sooner of this, but I was in Leeds and came the moment I heard. Do you remember the time we were at the Hall Farm together, and I told you to be sure and think of me as a friend in trouble?

HETTY.

Yes—but you can do nothing for me now. You can't make 'em do anything. They'll hang me in the morning. It's arter midnight now.

(She shudders and clings to Dinah.)

DINAH.

No, Hetty, I can't save you from that death. But isn't the suffering less hard when you have somebody

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with you, that feels for you—that you can speak to, and say what's in your heart? . . . Hetty, lean on me; you are glad to have me with you?

HETTY.

You won't leave me, Dinah? You'll keep close to me?

DINAH.

No, Hetty, I won't leave you. I'll stay with you to the last . . . But, Hetty, there is some one else in this cell besides me, some one close to you.

HETTY (In a frightened whisper.)

Who?

DINAH.

Some one who has been with you through all your hours of sin and trouble—who has known every thought you have had—has seen where you went, where you laid down and rose up again, and all the deeds you have tried to hide in darkness. And in the morning, when I can't follow you—when my arms can't reach you—when death has parted us—He who is with us now, and knows all, will be with you then. It makes no difference—whether we live or die, we are in the presence of God.

HETTY.

Oh, Dinah, won't nobody do anything for me? WILL they hang me for certain? . . . I wouldn't mind if they'd let me live.

DINAH.

My poor Hetty, death is very dreadful to you. I know it's dreadful. But if you had a friend to take care of you after death—in that other world—some one whose love is greater than mine—who can do everything. . . If God our Father was your friend, and was willing to save you from sin and suffering, so as you should neither know wicked feelings nor pain again? If you could believe He loved you and would help you, as you believe that I love you and will help you, it wouldn't be so hard to die would it?

HETTY.

But I can't know anything about it.

DINAH.

Because, Hetty, you are shutting up your soul against Him by trying to hide the truth. God's love and mercy can overcome all things—ignorance, and weakness, and all the burden of our past wickedness—all things but our willful sin; sin that we cling to, and will not give up. . . He can't bless you while you have one falsehood in your soul; His mercy can't reach you until you open your heart, and say, 'I have done this great wickedness; O God, save me, make me pure from sin.' Cast it off, now, Hetty—now; confess the wickedness you have done—the sin you have been guilty of against your heavenly Father. Let us kneel down together, for we are in the presence of God.
(Holding Hetty's hand. Dinah kneels and Hetty follows her.)

DINAH.

Hetty, we are before God; He is waiting for you to tell the truth.

HETTY (Beseechingly.)

Dinah. . . help me. . . I can't feel anything like you. . . my heart is hard.

DINAH (Her whole soul in her voice.)

Jesus, thou present Saviour! Thou hast known the depths of all sorrow; Thou hast entered that black darkness where God is not, and has uttered the cry of the forsaken. Come, Lord, and gather of the fruits of Thy travail and Thy pleading; stretch forth Thy hand, Thou who art mighty to save to the uttermost, and rescue this lost one. She is clothed round with thick darkness; the fetters of her sin are upon her, and she cannot stir to come to Thee; she can only feel that her heart is hard, and she is helpless. She cries to me, Thy weak creature. . . Saviour! It is a blind cry to thee. Hear it! Pierce the darkness! Look upon her with Thy face of love and sorrow, that Thou didst turn on him who denied Thee; and melt her hard heart.

See, Lord—I bring her, as they of old brought the sick and helpless, and Thou didst heal them; I bear her on my arms and carry her before Thee. Saviour! it is yet time—time to snatch this poor soul from everlasting darkness. I believe—I believe in Thy infinite love. What is MY love or MY pleading? It is quenched in Thine. I can only clasp her in my weak arms, and urge her with my weak pity. Thou—Thou wilt breathe on the dead soul, and it shall arise from the unanswering sleep of death. Lord, I see Thee, coming through the darkness, coming, like the morning, with healing on Thy wings. The marks of Thy agency are upon Thee—I see I see Thou art able and willing to save—Thou wilt not let her perish forever. Come, mighty Saviour; let the dead hear Thy voice; let the eyes of the blind be opened; let her see that God encompasses her; let her tremble at nothing but at the sin that cuts her off from Him. Melt the hard heart; unseal the closed lips; make her cry with her whole soul, "Father, I have sinned!"

HETTY (Sobbing and throwing her arms around Dinah's neck.)

Dinah, I will speak. . . I will tell. . . I won't hide it any more.

(They sit on the bed.)

HETTY.

I did do it, Dinah. . . I buried it in the wood. . . the little baby. . . and it cried. . . I heard it cry . . . ever such a way off. . . all night. . . and I went back because it cried. . . (after a pause) But I thought perhaps it wouldn't die—there might somebody find it. I didn't kill—I didn't kill it myself. I put it down there and covered it up, and when I came back it was gone. . . It was because I was so very miserable. Dinah. . . I didn't know where to go. . . and I tried to kill myself before, and I couldn't. Oh, I tried so to drown myself in the pool, and I couldn't. I went to Windsor. I ran away—did you know? I went to find him, as he might take care of me; and he was gone; and then I didn't know what to do. I daredn't go back home again—I couldn't bear it. I couldn't

have bore to look at anybody, for they'd have scorned me. I thought o' you sometimes, and thought I'd come to you, for I didn't think you'd be cross with me, and cry shame on me. I thought I could tell you. But then, the other folks 'ud come to know it at last, and I couldn't bear that. I was so frightened at going wandering about till I was a beggar-woman, and had nothing; and sometimes it seemed as if I must go back to the Farm sooner than that. Oh! it was so dreadful, Dinah. I was so miserable. . . I wished I'd never been born into this world. I should never like to go into the fields again—I hated 'em so in my misery.

DINAH.

My poor child.

HETTY.

And then I got to Windsor and the little baby was born, when I didn't expect it; and the thought came into my mind that I might get rid of it, and go home again. The thought came all of a sudden, as I was lying in the bed, and it got stronger and stronger. . . I longed to go back again. . . I couldn't bear being so lonely and coming to beg for want. And it gave me strength to get up and dress myself. I felt I must do it. . . I didn't know how. . . I thought I'd find a pool, if I could; like that other, in the corner of the field in the dark. And when the woman went out, I felt as if I was strong enough to do anything. . . I thought I should get rid of all my misery and go back home, and never let 'em know why I ran away. I put on my bonnet and cloak and went out into the dark street with the baby under my cloak, and I walked fast till I got into a street a good way off and there was a public inn and I got some warm stuff to drink and some bread. And I walked on and on, and I hardly felt the ground I trod on; and it got lighter, for there came the moon—oh, Dinah! it frightened me when it first looked at me out o' the clouds—it never looked so before; and I turned out of the road into the fields, for I was afraid o' meeting anybody with the moon shining on me. And

I came to a hay-stack, where I thought I could lie down and keep myself warm all night. There was a place cut into it, where I could make me a bed; and I lay comfortable, and the baby was warm against me; and I must have gone to sleep for a good while, for when I woke it was morning, but not very light, and the baby was crying. And I saw a wood a little way off. . . . I thought there'd perhaps be a ditch or a pond there. . . and it was so early I thought I could hide the child there, and get a long way off before the folks was up. And then I thought I'd go home—I'd get rides in carts and go home, and tell 'em I'd been to try and seek for a place and couldn't get one. I longed so for it, Dinah—I longed so to be safe at home. I don't know how I felt about the baby. I seemed to hate it—it was like a heavy weight hanging round my neck; and yet its crying went through me, and I dared not look at its little hands and face. But I went on to the wood, and I walked about, but there was no water.

(Hetty shudders. After a silence she goes on in a loud whisper.)

I came to a place where there were lots of chips and turf, and I sat down on the trunk of a tree to think what I should do. And all of a sudden I saw a hole under the nut-tree, like a little grave. And it darted into me like lightning—I'd lay the baby there, and cover it with the grass and the chips. I couldn't kill it any other way. And I'd done it in a minute; and oh, it cried so, Dinah—I COULDN'T cover it quite up. I thought perhaps somebody 'ud come and take care of it, and then it wouldn't die. And I made haste out of the wood, but I could hear it crying all the while; and when I got out into the fields, it was as if I was held fast—I couldn't go away, for all I wanted so to go. And I sat against the haystack to watch if anybody 'ud come; I was very hungry, and I'd only a bit of bread left; but I couldn't go away. And after ever such a while—hours and hours—the man came—him in the smock-frock—and he looked at me so, I was frightened, and I made

haste and went on. I thought he was going to the wood and would, perhaps, find the baby. And I went right on, till I came to a village, a long way off from the wood; and I was very sick, and faint, and hungry. I got something to eat there, and bought a loaf. But I was frightened to stay. I heard the baby crying, and thought the other folks heard it too—and I went on. But I was so tired, and it was getting toward dark. And at last by the roadside there was a barn—ever such a way off any house—and I thought I could go in there and hide myself among the hay and straw, and nobody 'ud be likely to come. I went in, and it was half full o' trusses of straw, and there was some hay too. And I made myself a bed, ever so far behind, where nobody could find me; and I was so tired and weak, I went to sleep. . . . But oh, the baby's crying kept waking me; and I thought that man as looked at me so was come and laying hold of me. But I must have slept a long while at last, though I didn't know; for when I got up and went out of the barn, I didn't know whether it was night or morning. But it was morning, for it kept getting lighter; and I turned back the way I'd come. I couldn't help it, Dinah; it was the baby's crying made me go; and yet I was frightened to death. I thought that man in the smock-frock 'ud see me, and know I put the baby there. But I went on, for I'd left off thinking about going home—it had gone out o' my mind. I saw nothing but that place in the wood where I'd buried the baby. . . . I see it now. Oh, Dinah! shall I allays see it?

(Clings to Dinah, shuddering, but goes on again.)

I met nobody, for it was very early, and I got into the wood. . . . I knew the way to the place. . . . the place against the nut-tree; and I could hear it crying at every step. . . . I thought it was alive. . . . I don't know whether I was frightened or glad. . . . I don't know what I felt. I only know I was in the wood and heard the cry. I don't know what I felt till I saw the baby was gone. And when I'd put it there, I thought

I should like somebody to find it, and save it from dying; but when I saw it was gone, I was struck like a stone with fear. I never thought o' stirring, I felt so weak. I knew I couldn't run away, and everybody as saw me 'ud know about the baby. My heart went like a stone; I couldn't wish or try for anything; it seemed like as if I should stay there forever, and nothing 'ud ever change. But they came and took me away.

(Another silence.)

Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying and the place in the wood, now I've told everything?

DINAH.

Let us fall on our knees again, and pray to the God of all mercy.

(The key is heard grating in the lock and Hetty, with a shriek, clings to Dinah. The door opens to admit Adam.)

DINAH.

Speak to him Hetty, tell him what is in your heart.

HETTY.

Adam. . . I'm very sorry. . . I behaved very wrong to you. . . will you forgive me. . . before I die?

ADAM (With a half sob.)

..

Yes, I forgive thee, Hetty; I forgave thee long ago.

HETTY (Keeping hold of Dinah's hand. goes up to Adam and says timidly.)

Will you kiss me again, Adam, for all I've been so wicked?

(Adam takes her hand and they give the solemn kiss of a lifelong parting.)

HETTY (In a stronger voice.)

And tell him. . . tell him. . . for there's nobody else to tell him. . . as I went after him and couldn't find him. . . and I hated him and cursed him once. . . but Dinah says I should forgive him. . . and I try. . . for else God won't forgive me

(There is a noise at the door of the cell and a key turns in

the lock. There is a crowd of jailers at the door, with the prison chaplain and Mr. Irwine. Hetty stares at them, clasping Dinah's hand as

The Curtain Falls.

Scene 3.

TABLEAU.

The curtain rises to show Hetty and Dinah standing in the death cart on the way to execution. The time is 7:30 of a March morning, and the dawn is yet brilliant in the east. Hetty wears a long black cloak, her hair blows wild, and she is clasped in Dinah's arms. Dinah's eyes are fixed on the heavens and her lips move.

The Curtain Falls.



Adam Bede

A PLAY



Dramatized from George Elliot's Novel

Adam Bede



By
MABEL CLARE CRAFT
Oakland, California.



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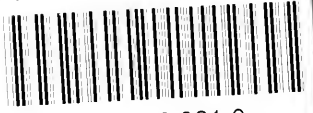
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